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VOLUME IV

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Vol. IV

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The Bi Belof

SAINTE AGNES OF INTERCESSION is confessedly a fragment.¹ Begun by Rossetti in 1848 or 1849, it was still in his mind during the last days of his life in 1882. When the end came the little packet of manuscript lay unopened on his writing table; the hand that had written it in other and joyous years would write no more.²

For us who love him there is the added pathos of incompleteness about this early story. We have already read the briefer

1. It was first printed in *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 2 vols., London, 1886.

2. "He constantly expressed his intention of finishing the story, and said that, although in its existing condition it was fully as long as the companion story," (*Hand and Soul*) "it would require twice as much more to complete it. During the time of our stay at Birchington, at the beginning of 1882, he seemed anxious to get to work upon it, and had the manuscript sent down from London for that purpose; but the packet lay unopened until after his death." (*Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* by T. Hall Caine, London, 1882.)

HAND AND SOUL. It belongs to the same period. Yet a little and William Morris is to print his own exquisite early romance, THE HOLLOW LAND. Then the great decade ending in 1860 will reveal in a new out-breathing of Art, and in a finer Poetry, an intellectual influence which has just come to its rounded close at Kelmscott Manor.

Both men were incomparable artists, makers and singers, both. And so fluctuant is the flame of poesy, so hard the way and long to supreme craftsmanship, that ages may pass before we look upon their like again.



FOR FEBRUARY:

LYRICS

from

PAUL VERLAINE.

SAINT AGNES
of
INTERCESSION

"In all my life," said my uncle in his customary voice, made up of goodness and trusting simplicity, and a spice of piety withal, which, an't pleased your worship, made it sound the sweeter,—*"In all my life,"* quoth my uncle Toby, *"I have never heard a stranger story than one which was told me by a sergeant in Maclure's regiment, and which, with your permission, Doctor, I will relate."*

"No stranger, brother Toby," said my father testily, *"than a certain tale to be found in Slawkenbergius (being the eighth of his third Decad), and called by him the History of an Icelandish Nose."*

"Nor than the golden legend of Saint Anschankus of Lithuania," added Dr. Slop, *"who, being troubled digestively while delivering his discourse 'de sanctis sanctorum,' was tempted by the Devil in imagine vasisin contumeliam,—which is to say, —in the form of a vessel unto dishonour."*

Now Excentrio, as one mocking, sayeth, etc., etc.
—TRISTRAM SHANDY.

“THIS fragmentary tale forms, I think, no unworthy pendant to *Hand and Soul*. It does not seem to be intended to bear an equal weight of moral or spiritual significance; but is not less imaginative, and its style of writing, if simpler and less resolutely sustained, seems to me fully as noticeable and individual. I incline to think that it was begun before *Hand and Soul*—in 1849, or even 1848; and was continued from time to time, probably into the spring of 1850. My brother intended to publish it in *The Germ*; and would doubtless have done so, had that magazine been less short-lived. He began an etching to illustrate it; but threw this aside in disgust at his failure in technique. At a later date Rossetti himself painted the like incident, in its mediæval phase, under the title of *Bonifazio's Mistress*. The written portion may be surmised to constitute less than half of the projected whole: my brother, according to Mr. Caine, indicated* that it would only be about a third. . . . The reader may observe that the name in the title, *St. Agnes of Intercession*, does not re-appear in the course of the story, where the picture itself comes to be spoken of: it was only adopted towards the time when the beginning of the tale was transcribed. Something in the nature of actual reminiscence may be traced in the opening details; as that of our father singing old revolutionary and other songs, and of the author leaving school early to study the painter's art. The motto from *Tristram Shandy* would not, I believe, be discoverable upon the most diligent turning over of the pages of that now too seldom read classic, which fascinated my brother greatly at a date not much earlier than the commencement of this tale: I regard it as his own.”

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI.

SAINT AGNES OF INTERCESSION.

AMONG my earliest recollections, none is stronger than that of my father standing before the fire when he came home in the London winter evenings, and singing to us in his sweet, generous tones: sometimes ancient English ditties,—such songs as one might translate from the birds, and the brooks might set to music; sometimes those with which foreign travel had familiarized his youth,—among them the great tunes which have rung the world's changes since '89. I used to sit on the hearth-rug, listening to him, and look between his knees into the fire till it burned my face, while the sights swarming up in it seemed changed and changed with the music: till the music and the fire and my heart burned together, and I would take paper and pencil, and try in some childish way to fix the shapes that rose within me. For my hope, even then, was to be a painter.

The first book I remember to have read, of my own accord, was an old-fashioned work on Art, which my mother had,—Hamilton's "English Conoscente." It was a kind of continental tour,—sufficiently Della-

Cruscan, from what I can recall of it,—and contained notices of pictures which the author had seen abroad, with engravings after some of them. These were in the English fashion of that day, executed in stipple and printed with red ink; tasteless enough, no doubt, but I yearned towards them and would toil over them for days. One especially possessed for me a strong and indefinable charm: it was a Saint Agnes in glory, by Bucciolo d'Orlì Angiolieri. This plate I could copy from the first with much more success than I could any of the others; indeed, it was mainly my love of the figure, and a desire to obtain some knowledge regarding it, which impelled me, by one magnanimous effort upon the "Conoscente," to master in a few days more of the difficult art of reading than my mother's laborious inculcations had accomplished till then. However, what I managed to spell and puzzle out related chiefly to the executive qualities of the picture, which could be little understood by a mere child; of the artist himself, or the meaning of his work, the author of the book appeared to know scarcely anything.

As I became older, my boyish impulse towards art grew into a vital passion; till at last my father took me from school and permitted me my own bent of study. There is no need that I should dwell much upon the next few years of my life. The beginnings of Art, entered on at all seriously, present an alternation of extremes:—on the one hand, the most bewildering phases of mental endeavour, on the other, a toil rigidly exact and dealing often with trifles. What was then the precise shape of the cloud within my tabernacle, I could scarcely say now; or whether through so thick a veil I could be sure of its presence there at all. And as to which statue at the Museum I drew most or learned least from,—or which Professor at the Academy “set” the model in the worst taste,—these are things which no one need care to know. I may say, briefly, that I was wayward enough in the pursuit, if not in the purpose; that I cared even too little for what could be taught me by others; and that my original designs greatly outnumbered my school-drawings.

In most cases where study (such study, at least, as involves any practical elements)

has benumbed that subtle transition which brings youth out of boyhood, there comes a point, after some time, when the mind loses its suppleness and is riveted merely by the continuance of the mechanical effort. It is then that the constrained senses gradually assume their utmost tension, and any urgent impression from without will suffice to scatter the charm. The student looks up: the film of their own fixedness drops at once from before his eyes, and for the first time he sees his life in the face.

In my nineteenth year, I might say that, between one path of Art and another, I worked hard. One afternoon I was returning, after an unprofitable morning, from a class which I attended. The day was one of those oppressive lulls in autumn, when application, unless under sustained excitement, is all but impossible,—when the perceptions seem curdled and the brain full of sand. On ascending the stairs to my room, I heard voices there, and when I entered, found my sister Catharine, with another young lady, busily turning over my sketches and papers, as if in search of something. Catharine laughed, and introduced her com-

panion as Miss Mary Arden. There might have been a little malice in the laugh, for I remembered to have heard the lady's name before, and to have then made in fun some teasing inquiries about her, as one will of one's sisters' friends. I bowed for the introduction, and stood rebuked. She had her back to the window, and I could not well see her features at the moment; but I made sure she was very beautiful, from her tranquil body and the way that she held her hands. Catharine told me they had been looking together for a book of hers which I had had by me for some time, and which she had promised to Miss Arden. I joined in the search, the book was found, and soon after they left my room. I had come in utterly spiritless; but now I fell to and worked well for several hours. In the evening, Miss Arden remained with our family circle till rather late: till she left I did not return to my room, nor, when there, was my work resumed that night. I had thought her more beautiful than at first.

After that, every time I saw her, her beauty seemed to grow on my sight by gazing, as the stars do in water. It was

some time before I ceased to think of her beauty alone; and even then it was still of her that I thought. For about a year my studies somewhat lost their hold upon me, and when that year was upon its close, she and I were promised in marriage.

Miss Arden's station in life, though not lofty, was one of more ease than my own, but the earnestness of her attachment to me had deterred her parents from placing any obstacles in the way of our union. All the more, therefore, did I now long to obtain at once such a position as should secure me from reproaching myself with any sacrifice made by her for my sake: and I now set to work with all the energy of which I was capable, upon a picture of some labour, involving various aspects of study. The subject was a modern one, and indeed it has often seemed to me that all work, to be truly worthy, should be wrought out of the age itself, as well as out of the soul of its producer, which must needs be a soul of the age. At this picture I laboured constantly and unweariedly, my days and my nights; and Mary sat to me for the principal female figure. The exhibition to

which I sent it opened a few weeks before the completion of my twenty-first year.

Naturally enough, I was there on the opening day. My picture, I knew, had been accepted, but I was ignorant of a matter perhaps still more important,—its situation on the walls. On that now depended its success; on its success the fulfilment of my most cherished hopes might almost be said to depend. That is not the least curious feature of life as evolved in society,—which, where the average strength and the average mind are equal, as in this world, becomes to each life another name for destiny,—when a man, having endured labour, gives its fruit into the hands of other men, that they may do their work between him and mankind: confiding it to them, unknown, without seeking knowledge of them; to them, who have probably done in like wise before him, without appeal to the sympathy of kindred experience: submitting to them his naked soul, himself, blind and unseen: and with no thought of retaliation, when, it may be, by their judgment, more than one year, from his dubious threescore and ten, drops alongside, unprofitable, leaving its baffled labour

for its successors to recommence. There is perhaps no proof more complete how sluggish and little arrogant, in aggregate life, is the sense of individuality.

I dare say something like this may have been passing in my mind as I entered the lobby of the exhibition, though the principle, with me as with others, was subservient to its application; my thoughts, in fact, starting from and tending towards myself and my own picture. The kind of uncertainty in which I then was is rather a nervous affair; and when, as I shouldered my way through the press, I heard my name spoken close behind me, I believe that I could have wished the speaker further off without being particular as to distance. I could not well, however, do otherwise than look round, and on doing so, recognized in him who had addressed me a gentleman to whom I had been introduced overnight at the house of a friend, and to whose remarks on the Corn question and the National Debt I had listened with a wish for deliverance somewhat akin to that which I now felt; the more so, perhaps, that my distaste was coupled with surprise; his name having

been for some time familiar to me as that of a writer of poetry.

As soon as we were rid of the crush, we spoke and shook hands; and I said, to conceal my chagrin, some platitudes as to Poetry being present to support her sister Art in the hour of trial.

"Oh just so, thank you," said he; "have you anything here?"

While he spoke, it suddenly struck me that my friend, the night before, had informed me this gentleman was a critic as well as a poet. And indeed, for the hippopotamus-fronted man, with his splay limbs and wading gait, it seemed the more congenial vocation of the two. In a moment, the instinctive antagonism wedged itself between the artist and the reviewer, and I avoided his question.

He had taken my arm, and we were now in the gallery together. My companion's scrutiny was limited almost entirely to the "line," but my own glance wandered furtively among the suburbs and outskirts of the ceiling, as a misgiving possessed me that I might have a personal interest in those unenviable "high places" of art. Works,

which at another time would have absorbed my whole attention, could now obtain from me but a restless and hurried examination: still I dared not institute an open search for my own, lest thereby I should reveal to my companion its presence in some dismal condemned corner which might otherwise escape his notice. Had I procured my catalogue, I might at least have known in which room to look, but I had omitted to do so, thinking thereby to know my fate the sooner, and never anticipating so vexatious an obstacle to my search. Meanwhile I must answer his questions, listen to his criticism, observe and discuss. After nearly an hour of this work, we were not through the first room. My thoughts were already bewildered, and my face burning with excitement.

By the time we reached the second room, the crowd was more dense than ever, and the heat more and more oppressive. A glance round the walls could reveal but little of the consecrated "line," before all parts of which the backs were clustered more or less thickly; except, perhaps, where at intervals hung the work of some venerable member, whose glory was departed from

him. The seats in the middle of the room were, for the most part, empty as yet: here and there only an unenthusiastic lady had been left by her party, and sat in stately unruffled toilet, her eye ranging apathetically over the upper portion of the walls, where the gilt frames were packed together in desolate parade. Over these my gaze also passed uneasily, but without encountering the object of its solicitude.

In this room my friend the critic came upon a picture, conspicuously hung, which interested him prodigiously, and on which he seemed determined to have my opinion. It was one of those tender and tearful works, those "labours of love," since familiar to all print-shop *flâneurs*,—in which the wax doll is made to occupy a position in Art which it can never have contemplated in the days of its humble origin. The silks heaved and swayed in front of this picture the whole day long.

All that we could do was to stand behind, and catch a glimpse of it now and then, through the whispering bonnets, whose "curtains" brushed our faces continually. I hardly knew what to say, but

my companion was lavish of his admiration, and began to give symptoms of the gushings of the poet-soul. It appeared that he had already seen the picture in the studio, and being but little satisfied with my monosyllables, was at great pains to convince me. While he chattered, I trembled with rage and impatience.

"You must be tired," said he at last; "so am I; let us rest a little." He led the way to a seat. I was his slave, bound hand and foot: I followed him.

The crisis now proceeded rapidly. When seated, he took from his pocket some papers, one of which he handed to me. Who does not know the dainty action of a poet fingering MS.? The knowledge forms a portion of those wondrous instincts implanted in us for self-preservation. I was past resistance, however, and took the paper submissively.

"They are some verses," he said, "suggested by the picture you have just seen. I mean to print them in our next number, as being the only species of criticism adequate to such a work."

I read the poem twice over, for after the

SAINT AGNES OF INTERCESSION

first reading I found I had not attended to a word of it, and was ashamed to give it him back. The repetition was not, however, much more successful, as regarded comprehension,—a fact which I have since believed (having seen it again) may have been dependent upon other causes besides my distracted thoughts. The poem, now included among the works of its author, runs as follows:—

“O thou who art not as I am,
Yet knowest all that I must be,—
O thou who livest certainly
Full of deep meekness like a lamb
Close laid for warmth under its dam,
On pastures bare towards the sea:—

“Look on me, for my soul is bleak,
Nor owns its labour in the years,
Because of the deep pain of tears:
It hath not found and will not seek,
Lest that indeed remain to speak
Which, passing, it believes it hears.

“Like ranks in calm unipotence
Swayed past, compact and regular,
Time's purposes and portents are:
Yet the soul sleeps, while in the sense
The graven brows of Consequence
Lie sunk, as in blind wells the star.

SAINT AGNES OF INTERCESSION

"O gaze along the wind-strewn path
That curves distinct upon the road
To the dim purple-hushed abode.
Lo! autumntide and aftermath!
Remember that the year has wrath
If the ungarnered wheat corrode.

"It is not that the fears are sore
Or that the evil pride repels,
But there where the heart's knowledge dwells
The heart is gnawed within the core,
Nor loves the perfume from that shore
Faint with bloom-pulvered asphodels."

Having atoned for non-attention by a second perusal, whose only result was non-comprehension, I thought I had done my duty towards this performance, which I accordingly folded up and returned to its author. He asked, in so many words, my opinion of it.

"I think," replied I coolly, "that when a poet strikes out for himself a new path in style, he should first be quite convinced that it possesses sufficient advantages to counter-balance the contempt which the swarm of his imitators will bring upon poetry."

My ambiguity was successful. I could see him take the compliment to himself, and inhale it like a scent, while a slow broad

smile covered his face. It was much as if, at some meeting, on a speech being made complimentary to the chairman, one of the waiters should elbow that personage aside, plant his knuckles on the table, and proceed to return thanks.

And indeed, I believe my gentleman was about to do so in due form, but my thoughts, which had been unable to resist some enjoyment of his conceit, now suddenly reverted to their one dominant theme; and rising at once, in an indignant spleen at being thus harassed and beset, I declared that I must leave him, and hurry through the rest of the gallery by myself, for that I had an impending appointment. He rose also. As we were shaking hands, a part of the "line" opposite to where we stood was left bare by a lapse in the crowd. "There seems to be an odd-looking picture," said my companion. I looked in the same direction: the press was closing again; I caught only a glimpse of the canvas, but that sufficed: it was my own picture *on the line!* For a moment, my head swam with me.

He walked towards the place, and I followed him. I did not at first hear well

what he said of the picture; but when I did, I found he was abusing it. He called it quaint, crude, even grotesque; and certainly the uncompromising adherence to nature as then present before me, which I had attempted throughout, gave it, in the exhibition, a more curious and unique appearance than I could have anticipated. Of course only a very few minutes elapsed before my companion turned to the catalogue for the artist's name.

"They thought the thing good," he drawled as he ran his eye down the pages, "or it wouldn't be on the line. 605, 606,—or else the fellow has interest somewhere. 630, what the deuce am I thinking of?—613, 613, 613—Here it is—Why," he exclaimed, short of breath with astonishment, "the picture is yours!"

"Well, it seems so," said I, looking over his shoulder; "I suppose they're likely to know."

"And so you wanted to get away before we came to it. And so the picture is yours!"

"Likely to remain so too," I replied laughing, "if every one thinks as well of it as you do."

"Oh! mind you," he exclaimed, "you must not be offended: one always finds fault first: I am sure to congratulate you."

The surprise he was in made him speak rather loud, so that people were beginning to nudge each other, and whisper that I was the painter. I therefore repeated hurriedly that I really must go, or I should miss my appointment.

"Stay a minute," ejaculated my friend the critic; "I am trying to think what the style of your picture is like. It is like the works of a very early man that I saw in Italy. Angioloni, Angellini, *Angiolieri*, that was the name, Bucciuolo Angiolieri. He always turned the toes in. The head of your woman there" (and he pointed to the figure painted from Mary) "is exactly like a St. Agnes of his at Bologna."

A flash seemed to strike before my eyes as he spoke. The name mentioned was a part of my first recollections; and the picture he spoke of. . . . Yes, indeed, there, in the face of my betrothed bride, I beheld the once familiar features of the St. Agnes, forgotten since childhood! I gazed fixedly

on the work of my own hands; and thought turned in my brain like a wheel.

When I looked again towards my companion, I could see that he was wondering at my evident abstraction. I did not explain, but abruptly bidding him good-bye, hastened out of the exhibition.

As I walked homewards, the cloud was still about me, and the street seemed to pass me like a shadow. My life had been, as it were, drawn by, and the child and the man brought together. How had I not at once recognized, in her I loved, the dream of my childhood? Yet, doubtless, the sympathy of relation, though unconscious, must have had its influence. The fact of the likeness was a mere casualty, however singular; but that which had cast the shadow of the man's love in the path of the child, and left the seed at his heart to work its growth blindly in darkness, was surely much more than chance.

Immediately on reaching home, I made inquiries of my mother concerning my old friend the "English Conoscente"; but learned, to my disappointment, that she had long since missed the book, and had never recovered it. I felt vexed in the extreme.

The joy with which the news of my picture was hailed at home may readily be imagined. There was one, however, to whom it may have been more welcome even than to my own household: to her, as to myself, it was hope seen nearer. I could scarcely have assigned a reason why I refrained from mentioning to her, or to any one, the strange point of resemblance which I had been led to perceive; but from some unaccountable reluctance I kept it to myself at the time. The matter was detailed in the journal of the worthy poet-critic who had made the discovery; such scraps of research being much too scarce not to be worked to their utmost; it may be too that my precipitate retreat had left him in the belief of my being a convicted plagiarist. I do not think, however, that either Mary's family or my own saw the paper; and indeed it was much too æsthetic to permit itself many readers.

Meanwhile, my picture was obtaining that amount of notice, favourable with unfavourable, which constitutes success, and was not long in finding a purchaser. My way seemed clearing before me. Still, I could not prevent my mind from dwelling on the curious

incident connected with the painting, and which, by constant brooding upon it, had begun to assume, in my idea, almost the character of a mystery. The coincidence was the more singular that my work, being in subject, costume, and accessories, English, and of the present period, could scarcely have been expected to suggest so striking an affinity in style to the productions of one of the earliest Italian painters.

The gentleman who purchased my picture had commissioned me at the same time for another. I had always entertained a great wish to visit Italy, but now a still stronger impulse than before drew me thither. All substantial record having been lost, I could hardly persuade myself that the idol of my childhood, and the worship I had rendered it, was not all an unreal dream: and every day the longing possessed me more strongly to look with my own eyes upon the veritable St. Agnes. Not holding myself free to marry as yet, I therefore determined (having it now within my power) that I would seek Italy at once, and remain there while I painted my next picture. Nor could even the thought of leaving Mary deter me from this resolution.

On the day I quitted England, Mary's father again placed her hand in mine, and renewed his promise; but our own hearts were a covenant between us.

From this point, my narrative will proceed more rapidly to its issue. Some lives of men are as the sea is, continually vexed and trampled with winds. Others are, as it were, left on the beach. There the wave is long in reaching its tide-mark, where it abides but a moment; afterwards, for the rest of that day, the water is shifted back more or less slowly; the sand it has filled hardens; and hourly the wind drives lower till nightfall.

To dwell here on my travels any further than in so much as they concern the thread of my story, would be superfluous. The first place where I established myself, on arriving in the Papal State, was Bologna, since it was there, as I well remembered, that the St. Agnes of Bucciolo Angiolieri was said to be. I soon became convinced, however, after ransacking the galleries and private collections, that I had been misinformed. The great Clementine is for the most part a dismal wilderness of Bolognese Art, "where nothing is that hath life," being

rendered only the more ghastly by the "life-in-death" of Guido and the Caracci; and the private collectors seem to emulate the Clementine.

From Bologna I removed to Rome, where I stayed only for a month, and proceeded thence into Tuscany. Here, in the painter's native province, after all, I thought the picture was most likely to be found; as is generally the case with artists who have produced comparatively few works, and whose fame is not of the highest order of all. Having visited Siena and Arezzo, I took up my abode in Florence. Here, however, seeing the necessity of getting to work at once, I commenced my next picture, devoting to it a certain number of hours each day; the rest of my time being chiefly spent among the galleries, where I continued my search. The St. Agnes still eluded me; but in the Pitti and elsewhere, I met with several works of Bucciolo; in all of which I thought, in fact, that I could myself recognize, despite the wide difference both of subject and occasional treatment, a certain mental approximation, not easily defined, to the style of my own productions. The

peculiarities of feeling and manner which had attracted my boyish admiration had evidently sunk deep, and maintained, though hitherto unperceived, their influence over me.

I had been at Florence for about three months, and my picture was progressing, though slowly enough; moreover, the other idea which engrossed me was losing its energy, by the recurrence of defeat, so that I now determined on leaving the thing mainly to chance, and went here and there, during the hours when I was not at work, seeing what was to see. One day, however, being in a bookseller's shop, I came upon some numbers of a new Dictionary of Works of Art, then in course of publication, where it was stated that a painting of St. Agnes, by Bucciolo Angiolieri, was in the possession of the Academy of Perugia. This then, doubtless, was the work I wished to see; and when in the Roman States, I must already have passed upon my search through the town which contained it. In how many books had I rummaged for the information which chance had at length thrown in my way! I was almost inclined to be provoked

with so inglorious a success. All my interest in the pursuit, however, revived at once, and I immediately commenced taking measures for retracing my steps to Perugia. Before doing so I despatched a long letter to Mary, with whom I kept up a correspondence, telling her where to direct her next missive, but without informing her as to the motive of my abrupt removal, although in my letter I dwelt at some length, among other topics, on those works of Bucciolo which I had met with at Florence.

I arrived at Perugia late in the evening, and to see the gallery before the next morning was out of the question. I passed a most restless night. The same one thought had been more or less with me during the whole of my journey, and would not leave me now until my wish was satisfied. The next day proved to be one on which the pictures were not visible; so that on hastening to the Academy in the morning, I was again disappointed. Upon the second day, had they refused me admittance, I believe I should have resorted to desperate measures. The doors however were at last wide open. Having put the swarm of guides to

roul, I set my feet on the threshold; and such is the power of one absorbing idea, long suffered to dwell on the mind, that as I entered I felt my heart choke me as if with some vague apprehension.

This portion of my story which the reader has already gone through is so unromantic and easy of belief, that I fear the startling circumstances which remain to be told will jar upon him all the more by contrast as a clumsy fabrication. My course, however, must be to speak on, relating to the best of my memory things in which the memory is not likely to have failed; and reserving at least my own inward knowledge that all the events of this narrative (however unequal the measure of credit they may obtain) have been equally, with myself, matters of personal experience.

The Academy of Perugia is, in its little sphere, one of the high places of privilege; and the first room, the Council Chamber, full of rickety arm chairs, is hung with the presentation pictures of the members, a collection of indigenous grandeurs of the school of David. I purchased a catalogue of an old woman who was knitting in one

corner, and proceeded to turn the leaves with nervous anxiety. Having found that the Florentine pictures were in the last room, I commenced hurrying across the rest of the gallery as fast as the polish of the waxed boards would permit. There was no visitor besides myself in the rooms, which were full of Roman, Bolognese, and Perugian handiwork: one or two students only, who had set up their easels before some masterpiece of the "advanced" style, stared round in wonder at my irreverent haste. As I walked, I continued my search in the catalogue; so that, by the time I reached the Florentine room, I had found the number, and walked, with a beating heart, straight up to the picture.

The picture is about half the size of life; it represents a beautiful woman, seated, in the costume of the painter's time, richly adorned with jewels; she holds a palm branch, and a lamb nestles to her feet. The glory round her head is a device pricked without colour on the gold background, which is full of the faces of angels. The countenance was the one known to me, by a feeble reflex, in childhood; it was also the

exact portrait of Mary, feature by feature. I had been absent from her for more than five months, and it was like seeing her again.

As I looked, my whole life seemed to crowd about me, and to stun me like a pulse in my head. For some time I stood lost in astonishment, admiration, perplexity helpless of conjecture, and an almost painful sense of love.

I had seen that in the catalogue there was some account of the picture; and now, after a long while, I removed my eyes, dizzy with gazing and with thought, from the face, and read in Italian as follows:

"No. 212. St. Agnes, with a glory of angels. By Bucciuolo Angiolieri.

"Bertuccio, Buccio, or Bucciuolo d'Orli Angiolieri, a native of Cignana in the Florentine territory, was born in 1405 and died in 1460. He was the friend, and has been described as the pupil, of Benozzo Gozzoli; which latter statement is not likely to be correct, since their ages were nearly the same, as are also the dates of their earliest known pictures.

"He is said by some to have been the first to introduce a perfectly nude figure in

a devotional subject (the St. Sebastian now at Florence); an opinion which Professor Ehrenhaupt has called in question, by fixing the date of the five anonymous frescoes in the Church of Sant' Andrea d'Oltr'arno, which contain several nude figures, at a period antecedent to that in which he flourished. His works are to be met with at Florence, at Lucca, and in one or two cities of Germany. The present picture, though ostensibly representing St. Agnes, is the portrait of Blanzifiore dall'Ambra, a lady to whom the painter was deeply attached, and who died early. The circumstances connected by tradition with the painting of this picture are of a peculiarly melancholy nature.

"It appears that, in the vicissitudes of faction, the lady's family were exiled from Florence, and took refuge at Lucca; where some of them were delivered by treachery to their enemies and put to death. These accumulated misfortunes (not the least among which was the separation from her lover, who, on account of his own ties and connections, could not quit Florence), preyed fatally on the mind and health of Blanzifiore;

and before many months had passed, she was declared to be beyond medicinal aid. No sooner did she learn this, than her first thought was of the misery which her death would occasion her lover; and she insisted on his being summoned immediately from Florence, that they might at least see each other once again upon earth. When, on his arrival, she witnessed his anguish at thus losing her for ever, Blanzifiore declared that she would rise at once from her bed, and that Bucciuolo should paint her portrait before she died; for so, she said, there should still remain something to him whereby to have her in memory. In this will she persisted against all remonstrance occasioned by the fears of her friends; and for two days, though in a dying state, she sat with wonderful energy to her lover: clad in her most sumptuous attire, and arrayed with all her jewels: her two sisters remaining constantly at her side, to sustain her and supply restoratives. On the third day, while Bucciuolo was still at work, she died without moving.

“After her death, Bucciuolo finished the portrait, and added to it the attributes of

St. Agnes, in honour of her purity. He kept it always near him during his lifetime; and, in dying, bequeathed it to the Church of Santa Agnese dei Lavoranti, where he was buried at her side. During all the years of his life, after the death of Blanzifiore, he remained at Lucca: where some of his works are still to be found.

"The present picture has been copied many times, but never competently engraved; and was among those conveyed to Paris by Bonaparte, in the days of his omnipotence."

The feeling of wonder which attained bewilderment, as I proceeded with this notice, was yet less strong than an intense penetrating sympathy excited in me by the unhappy narrative, which I could not easily have accounted for, but which so overcame me that, as I finished, the tears stung my eyes. I remained for some time leaning upon the bar which separated me from the picture, till at last my mind settled to more definite thought. But thought here only served to confound. A woman had then lived four hundred years since, of whom that picture was the portrait; and my own eyes bore me witness that it was also the

surpassingly perfect resemblance of a woman now living and breathing,—of my own affianced bride! While I stood, these things grew and grew upon my mind, till my thoughts seemed to hustle about me like pent-up air.

The catalogue was still open in my hand; and now, as my eyes wandered, in aimless distraction, over the page, they were arrested by these words: "*No. 231. Portrait of Bucciolo Angiolieri painted by himself.*" At first my bewildered perceptions scarcely attached a meaning to the words; yet, owing no doubt to the direction of my thoughts, my eye dwelt upon them, and continued to peruse them over and over, until at last their purport flashed upon me. At the same instant that it did so, I turned round and glanced rapidly over the walls for the number: it was at the other end of the room. A trembling suspense, with something almost of involuntary awe, was upon me as I ran towards the spot; the picture was hung low; I stooped over the rail to look closely at it, and was face to face with *myself*! I can recall my feeling at that moment, only as one of the most lively and exquisite fear.

It was myself, of nearly the same age as mine was then, but perhaps a little older. The hair and beard were of my colour, trimmed in an antique fashion; and the dress belonged to the early part of the fifteenth century. In the background was a portion of the city of Florence. One of the upper corners contained this inscription:—

ALBERTUS* ORLITIS ANGELERIUS

Ipsum ipse

ÆTAT. SUÆ XXIV.

That it *was* my portrait,—that the St. Agnes was the portrait of Mary,—and that both had been painted by myself four hundred years ago,—this now rose up distinctly before me as the one and only solution of so startling a mystery, and as being, in fact, that result round which, or some portion of which, my soul had been blindly hovering, uncertain of itself. The tremendous experience of that moment, the like of which has never, perhaps, been known to any other man, must remain undescribed; since the description, read calmly at common leisure,

**Alberto*, Albertuccio, Bertuccio, Buccio, *Bucciuolo*.

could seem but fantastic raving. I was as one who, coming after a wilderness to some city dead since the first world, should find among the tombs a human body in his own exact image, embalmed; having the blackened coin still within its lips, and the jars still at its side, in honour of gods whose very names are abolished.

After the first incapable pause, during which I stood rooted to the spot, I could no longer endure to look on the picture, and turning away, fled back through the rooms and into the street. I reached it with the sweat springing on my forehead, and my face felt pale and cold in the sun.

As I hurried homewards, amid all the chaos of my ideas, I had clearly resolved on one thing,—namely, that I would leave Perugia that night on my return to England. I had passports which would carry me as far as the confines of Italy; and when there I counted on somehow getting them signed at once by the requisite authorities, so as to pursue my journey without delay.

On entering my room in the hotel where I had put up, I found a letter from Mary lying on the table. I was too much agitated

with conflicting thoughts to open it at once; and therefore allowed it to remain till my perturbation should in some measure have subsided. I drew the blinds before my windows, and covered my face to think; my forehead was still damp between my hands. At least an hour must have elapsed in that tumult of the spirit which leaves no impression behind, before I opened the letter.

It was an answer to the one which I had posted before leaving Florence. After many questions and much news of home, there was a paragraph which ran thus:—

“The account you give me of the works of Bucciolo Angiolieri interested me greatly. I am surprised never to have heard you mention him before, as he appears to find so much favour with you. But perhaps he was unknown to you till now. How I wish I could stand by your side before his pictures, to enjoy them with you and hear you interpret their beauties! I assure you that what you say about them is so vivid, and shows so much insight into all the meanings of the painter, that, while reading, I could scarcely divest myself of the impression that you were describing some of your own works.”

As I finished the last sentence, the paper fell from my hands. A solemn passage of scripture had been running in my mind; and as I again lay back and hid my now burning and fevered face, I repeated it aloud:—"How unsearchable are Thy judgments, and Thy ways past finding out!"

As I have said, my intention was to set out from Perugia that same night; but on making enquiry, I found that it would be impossible to do so before the morning, as there was no conveyance till then. Post-horses, indeed, I might have had, but of this my resources would not permit me to think. That was a troubled and gloomy evening for me. I wrote, as well as my disturbed state would allow me, a short letter to my mother, and one to Mary, to apprise them of my return; after which, I went early to bed, and, contrary to my expectations, was soon asleep.

That night I had a dream, which has remained as clear and whole in my memory as the events of the day: and so strange were those events—so apart from the rest of my life till then,—that I could sometimes almost persuade myself that my dream of

that night also was not without a mystic reality.

I dreamt that I was in London, at the exhibition where my picture had been; but in the place of my picture, which I could not see, there hung the St. Agnes of Perugia. A crowd was before it; and I heard several say that it was against the rules to hang that picture, for that the painter (naming me) was dead. At this, a woman who was there began to weep: I looked at her and perceived it to be Mary. She had her arm in that of a man who appeared to wear a masquerade dress; his back was towards me, and he was busily writing on some tablets; but on peering over his shoulder, I saw that his pencil left no mark where it passed, which he did not seem to perceive, however, going on as before. I spoke to Mary, but she continued crying and did not look up. I then touched her companion on the shoulder; but finding that he paid no attention, I shook him and told him to resign that lady's arm to me, as she was my bride. He then turned round suddenly, and showed me my own face with the hair and beard quaintly cut, as in the portrait

of Bucciolo. After looking mournfully at me, he said, "Not mine, friend, but neither thine:" and while he spoke, his face fell in like a dead face. Meantime, every one seemed pale and uneasy, and they began to whisper in knots; and all at once I found opposite me the critic I met at the gallery, who was saying something I could not understand, but so fast that he panted and kept wiping his forehead. Then my dream changed. I was going up stairs to my room at home, where I thought Mary was waiting to sit for her portrait. The staircase was quite dark; and as I went up, the voices of several persons I knew passed by me, as if they were descending; and sometimes my own among them. I had reached the top, and was feeling for the handle of the door, when it was opened suddenly by an angel; and looking in, I saw, not Mary, but a woman whose face was hidden with white light, and who had a lamb beside her that was bleating aloud. She knelt in the middle of the room, and I heard her say several times: "O Lord it is more than he can bear. Spare him, O Lord, for her sake whom he consecrated to me." After this, music came

out of heaven, and I thought to have heard speech; but instead, there was silence that woke me.

This dream must have occurred repeatedly in the course of the night, for I remember waking up in perfect darkness, overpowered with fear, and crying out in the words which I had heard spoken by the woman; and when I woke in the morning, it was from the same dream, and the same words were on my lips.

During the two days passed at Perugia, I had not had time to think of the picture I was engaged upon, which had therefore remained in its packing-case, as had also the rest of my baggage. I was thus in readiness to start without further preliminaries. My mind was so confused and disturbed that I have but a faint recollection of that morning; to the agitating events of the previous day, my dream had now added, in spite of myself, a vague foreboding of calamity.

No obstacle occurred throughout the course of my journey, which was, even at that recent date, a longer one than it is now. The whole time, with me, was occupied by

one haunting and despotic idea: it accompanied me all day on the road; and if we paused at night it either held me awake or drove all rest from my sleep. It is owing to this, I suppose, that the wretched mode of conveyance, the evil roads, the evil weather, the evil inns, the harassings of petty authorities, and all those annoyances which are set as close as milestones all over the Continent, remain in my memory only with a general sense of discomfort. Moreover, on the day when I left Perugia I had felt the seeds of fever already in my veins; and during the journey this oppression kept constantly on the increase. I was obliged, however, carefully to conceal it, since the panic of the cholera was again in Europe, and any sign of illness would have caused me to be left at once on the road.

By the night of my arrival in London, I felt that I was truly and seriously ill; and, indeed, during the last part of the journey, physical suffering had for the first time succeeded in partially distracting my thought from the thing which possessed it. The first inquiries I made of my family were regarding Mary. I learned that she at least was still

in good health, and anxiously looking for my arrival; that she would have been there, indeed, but that I had not been expected till a day later. This was a weight taken from my heart. After scarcely more than an hour passed among my family, I repaired to my bed; both body and mind had at length a perfect craving for rest. My mother, immediately on my arrival, had noticed my flushed and haggard appearance; but when questioned by her I attributed this to the fatigues of travelling.

In spite of my extreme need of sleep, and the wish I felt for it, I believe that I slept but little that night. I am not certain, however, for I can only remember that as soon as I lay down my head began to whirl till I seemed to be lifted out of my bed; but whether this were in waking or a part of some distempered dream, I cannot determine. This, however, is the last thing I can recall. The next morning I was in a raging fever, which lasted for five weeks.

Health and consciousness came back to me by degrees, as light and air towards the outlet of a long vault. At length, one day, I sat up in bed for the first time. My head

felt light in the pillows; and the sunshine that warmed the room made my blood creep refreshingly. My father and mother were both with me.

As sense had deserted my mind, so had it returned, in the form of one constant thought. But this was now grown peremptory, absolute, uncompromising, and seemed to cry within me for speech, till silence became a torment. To-day, therefore, feeling for the first time, since my gradual recovery, enough of strength for the effort, I resolved that I would at last tell the whole to my parents. Having first warned them of the extraordinary nature of the disclosure I was about to make, I accordingly began. Before I had gone far with my story, however, my mother fell back in her seat, sobbing violently; then rose, and running up to me, kissed me many times, still sobbing and calling me her poor boy. She then left the room. I looked towards my father, and saw that he had turned away his face. In a few moments he rose also without looking at me, and went out as my mother had done.

I could not quite account for this, but was so weary of doubt and conjecture, that I was

content to attribute it to the feelings excited by my narration and the pity for all those troubles which the events I spoke of had brought upon me. It may appear strange, but I believe it to have been the fact, that the startling and portentous reality which those events had for me, while it left me fully prepared for wonder and perturbation on the part of my hearers, prevented the idea from even occurring to me that, as far as belief went, there could be more hesitation in another's than in my own.

It was not long before my father returned. On my questioning him as to the cause of my mother's excitement, he made no explicit answer, but begged to hear the remainder of what I had to disclose. I went on, therefore, and told my tale to the end. When I had finished, my father again appeared deeply affected; but soon recovering himself, endeavoured, by reasoning, to persuade me either that the circumstances I had described had no foundation save in my own diseased fancy, or else that at the time of their occurrence incipient illness had caused me to magnify very ordinary events into marvels and omens.

SAINT AGNES OF INTERCESSION

Finding that I still persisted in my conviction of their actuality, he then informed me that the matters I had related were already known to himself and to my mother through the disjointed ravings of my long delirium, in which I had dwelt on the same theme incessantly; and that their grief, which I had remarked, was occasioned by hearing me discourse thus connectedly on the same wild and unreal subject, after they had hoped me to be on the road to recovery. To convince me that this could merely be the effect of prolonged illness, he led me to remark that I had never till then alluded to the topic, either by word or in any of my letters, although, by my account, the chain of coincidences had already begun before I left England. Lastly, he implored me most earnestly at once to resist and dispel this fantastic brain-sickness, lest the same idea, allowed to retain possession of my mind, might end,—as he dreaded to think that it indeed might,—by endangering my reason.

My father's last words struck me like a stone in the mouth; there was no longer any answer that I could make. I was very weak at the time, and I believe I lay down

in my bed and sobbed. I remember it was on that day that it seemed to me of no use to see Mary again, or, indeed, to strive again after any aim I had had, and that for the first time I wished to die; and then it was that there came distinctly, such as it may never have come to any other man, the unutterable suspicion of the vanity of death.

From that day until I was able to leave my bed, I never in any way alluded to the same terrible subject; but I feared my father's eye as though I had been indeed a madman. It is a wonder that I did not really lose my senses. I lived in a continual panic lest I should again speak of that matter unconsciously, and used to repeat inwardly, for hours together, words enjoining myself to silence. Several friends of the family, who had made constant inquiries during my illness, now wished to see me; but this I strictly refused, being in fear that my incubus might get the better of me, and that I might suddenly implore them to say if they had any recollection of a former existence. Even a voice or a whistle from the street would set me wondering whether that man also had lived before, and if so,

why I alone should be cursed with this awful knowledge. It was useless even to seek relief in books; for the name of any historical character occurring at once disturbed my fevered mind with conjectures as to what name its possessor *now* bore, who he was, and in what country his lot was cast.

For another week after that day I was confined to my room, and then at last I might go forth. Latterly, I had scarcely spoken to any one, but I do not think that either my father or my mother imagined I had forgotten. It was on a Sunday that I left the house for the first time. Some person must have been buried at the neighbouring church very early that morning, for I recollect that the first thing I heard upon waking was the funeral bell. I had had, during the night, but a restless throbbing kind of sleep; and I suppose it was my excited nerves which made me wait with a feeling of ominous dread through the long pauses of the tolling, unbroken as they were by any sound from the silent Sunday streets, except the twitter of birds about the house-tops. The last knell had long ceased, and I had been lying for some time in bitter

reverie, when the bells began to ring for church. I cannot express the sudden refreshing joy which filled me at that moment. I rose from my bed, and kneeling down, prayed while the sound lasted.

On joining my parents at breakfast, I made my mother repeat to me once more how many times Mary had called during my illness, and all that she had said and done. They told me that she would probably be there that morning; but my impatience would not permit me to wait; I must go and seek her myself at once. Often already, said my parents, she had wished and begged to see me, but they had feared for my strength. This was in my thoughts as I left the house; and when, shutting the door behind me, I stood once again in the living sunshine, it seemed as if her love burst around me like music.

I set out hastily in the well-known direction of Mary's house. While I walked through the crowded streets, the sense of reality grew upon me at every step, and for the first time during some months I felt a man among men. Any artist or thoughtful man whatsoever, whose life has passed in a

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large city, can scarcely fail, in course of time, to have some association connecting each spot continually passed and repassed with the labours of his own mind. In the woods and fields every place has its proper spell and mystery, and needs no consecration from thought; but wherever in the daily walk through the thronged and jarring city, the soul has read some knowledge from life, or laboured towards some birth within its own silence, there abides the glory of that hour, and the cloud rests there before an unseen tabernacle. And thus now, with myself, old trains of thought and the conceptions of former years came back as I passed from one swarming resort to another, and seemed, by contrast, to wake my spirit from its wild and fantastic broodings to a consciousness of something like actual existence; as the mere reflections of objects, sunk in the vague pathless water, appear almost to strengthen it into substance.

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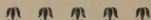
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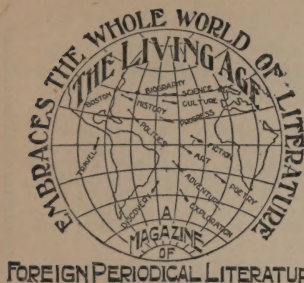
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A Be Bi Belof

“**L**ET us assume,” wrote Shelley in his Defence of Poetry, “let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman, that Lord Bacon was a peculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate . . . Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their ‘sins were as scarlet, they are now white as snow’; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time.”

Paul Verlaine was born at Metz in 1844, and died in Paris, January 10th, 1896. It seems, indeed, scarce yesterday since he, the latest of ‘our sad bad glad mad brothers,’ found the ‘Limit of Lands and of Life.’ To no man more than he, could Shelley’s words be better applied. Friend and foe alike have vied in stripping him of every vestige of reputation; one thing only, his bitterest traducer could not choose but admit,—the exquisite poetry of such verse as *Chanson d’automne*, the *Avant que tu ne t’en ailles*, and *Il pleure dans mon cœur*.

But, it has been said, 'such is the tenuity of his passion, such his elusive lights and shadows',—his best and worst, how translate them? If, as he contended, poetry was meant for ear rather than for eye, any English equivalent is palpably impossible. One feels however that a brilliant paradox has been uttered; that as a matter of literary technique in the versions here given, we not only hear the far faint horns of Poesy, but behold the elfin silhouettes projected against mystic moonlight backgrounds!

Yes! 'It was music ever and evermore', with Paul Verlaine, and no fantastic theory of decadence suffices to belittle him or bemock us, his admirers. For whether we consider Catullus or the nameless singers of the Anthology, Villon of the fifteenth or Baudelaire of the nineteenth century, maimed lives and lost souls though they be, yet we have to do with men of imperishable lyric gift, and this alone concerns us.



FOR MARCH:

BROWNING'S "MEN AND WOMEN"

A Review by

WILLIAM MORRIS.

LYRICS

from

PAUL VERLAINE

*Pain gnaws at my heart like a rat that gnaws at a beam
In the dusky dark of a ghost-frequented house;
And I dream of the days forgotten, of love the dream,
The desire of her eyes unappeased, and the peace of her brows.*

*I can hear the old rat gnaw in the dark by night,
In the deep overshadowing dust that the years have cast;
He gnaws at my heart that is empty of all delight,
He stirs the dust where the feet of my dreams had passed.*

ARTHUR SYMONS.

“**P**OÈMES SATURNIENS was the first as it is the freshest and in some respects the finest of Verlaine's volumes of verse. . . . It appeared in 1866 and was followed two years later by *Fêtes galantes*, an entirely novel collection of tender and sensuous idylls swathed in the sentiment of the seventeenth century. *La bonne Chanson* (1870) is a pure and joyous song of the one calm period in Verlaine's life, when love led him into a sweeter atmosphere. After his marriage he was mixed up with the Commune. Thereupon he took refuge in England and lived an obscure and chequered existence for about ten years. His *Romances sans paroles* (1874) are the only poems belonging ostensibly to this period, which was probably one of wasteful excess, for in 1881 he published *Sagesse*, a volume of pious verse inspired by remorse and filled with a longing for better things than the husks that the swine do eat. *Jadis et naguère* (in 1884) was a return to his earlier ideals of the poetic art, and *Amour* (in 1888) renewed the note of *Sagesse*,” and there have been many volumes since. . . .

“Among a thousand broken lights and shapes there are always glimpses of the true in his song. . . . He has given a new colour to the language of emotion and a new turn to the subtleties of ideal thought. In striving to enfranchise himself from certain narrow moulds of poetical expression he has achieved by sheer instinct the supreme triumph of the art of the nineteenth century—that subordination of conventional forms to the individual vision and voice which was the work of Turner in painting, of Wagner in music and of Carlyle in letters. So far from initiating the decadence of French verse, it is not unlikely that the impassioned and spiritual poetry of Paul Verlaine will usher in a new era and vindicate afresh the indefeasible privilege of genius.”

WILLIAM JOHN ROBERTSON.

POÈMES SATURNIENS.

(1866.)

CHANSON D'AUTOMNE.

I.

LES sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure.

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
Deçà, delà
Pareil à la
Feuille morte.

II.

The long-drawn sighs,
Like violin-cries,
 Of autumn wailing,
Lull in my soul
The languorous shoal
 Of thoughts assailing.

Wan, as whom knells
Of funeral bells
 Bemoan and banish,
I weep upon
Days dead and gone
 With dreams that vanish;

Then helpless swing
On the wind's wing;
 Tossed hither and thither
As winter sweeps
From swirling heaps
 Worn leaves that wither.

W. J. ROBERTSON.

THREE SONNETS:

I.

RESIGNATION.

EVEN as a child I dreamed of thee, Light-blender,
Kohinoor! Of Persian pomp and Papal splendour,
Heliogabalus and Sardanapâl!

Beneath the golden domes my fancy haunted
Were perfumes rare and melodies enchanted
In harems built for pleasures sensual.

And now, more calm, though not with colder heart,
But knowing life and prone to melancholy,
Late have I learned to curb my youthful folly,
Yet not too much resigned to play this part.

My soul, since the sublime will not unbend,
Spurn elegance, the lees of all things human!
Still, as erewhile, I hate the pretty woman,
The facile rhyme and eke the prudent friend.

II.

WEARINESS.

SOFT, soft, I pray, sweet heart that pants and presses !
Oh calm awhile those feverish ecstasies !
Even at the height of transport she is wise
Whose warmth a sister's tranquil love confesses.

Be languishing ! And lull me with your sighs,
As with your slumberous looks and slow caresses ;
Not the fierce clasp nor the spasm that possesses
Is worth one lingering kiss, even one that lies !

But, in your golden heart, you say, dear child,
Love blows her oliphant with longings wild ! . . .
There let the gipsy trumpet in her fashion !

Lay on my brow your brow, your hand in mine,
Breathe vows, to break them with the morrow's shine,
And let us weep till dawn, O soul of passion !

III.

ANGUISH.

NATURE, thou movst me not at all, nor fields
That nurse mankind, nor rosy echoes tender
Of Southern pastorals, nor auroral splendour,
Nor saddening calm that solemn sunset yields.

I laugh at Art, I hold man in derision,
Verse, song, Greek temples, towers whose spirals rise
Wreathed in the void of vast cathederal skies;
And good and ill to me are one vain vision.

I have no faith in God. Thought I despise
And spurn, and as for that old tale of lies,
Love, let them speak of it to me no more!

Life-wearied, fearing death; like a lost vessel,
Light plaything tossed betwixt wild surge and shore,
My soul with fate's last storm prepares to wrestle.

W. J. ROBERTSON.

THE LOVER'S HOUR.

L ow lies the moon red in the smoky sky,
And in a dancing mist the meadow-land
Lies asleep, veiled; a frog croaks near at hand,
'Mid green reeds where a shiver rustles by.

The water-lilies close their crowns in sleep;
Far distant poplars, straight and closely bound,
Profile uncertain shadows; on the ground
Towards the thickets now the glow-worms creep.

The screech-owls wake and pass in silent flight,
With heavy soft wings fanning the dark air;
The zenith fills with glimmerings, faintly clear.
Venus emerges, pale, and it is Night.

A. BERNARD MIALL.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

WITH noisy flight of birds that seek the tree
All my stirred memories swoop down on me,
Swoop down on my sere heart's once leafy pillow
Whose withered boughs, glassed like a bending willow,
Gloom in the violet waters of Regret
That flow beneath in sullen rivulet;
Swoop down, ere yet the breath of vaporous breezes
Risen in the dusk their clamorous sound appeases,
And in the tree it dies away, until
The moment comes when all is hushed and still,
All save thy voice, hymning the Absent Lover,
All save thy voice — O tremulous sighs that hover! —
Sweet bird, soul of my First Love, ever young,
And singing as on the first day she sung;
And now beneath a moon whose sorrowing splendour
Waxes in solemn sadness, wan and tender,
The mournful night, heavy with summer heat,
Full of dim shadows, full of silence sweet,
Lulls in blue air, wherethrough a soft wind shivers,
The bird that weeps and the worn tree that quivers.

W. J. ROBERTSON.

FÊTES GALANTES.

(1868.)

I.

MANDOLINE.

"Never shall I forget the first enchantment of *Les Fêtes Galantes*. Here all is twilight. The royal magnificences of the sunset have passed, the solemn beatitude of the night is at hand but not yet here; the ways are veiled with shadow, and lit with dresses, white, that the hour has touched with blue, yellow, green, mauve, and undecided purple; the voices? strange contraltos; the forms? not those of men or women, but mystic, hybrid creatures, with hands nervous and pale, and eyes charged with eager and fitful light . . . "un soir équivoque d'automne," . . . "les belles pendent rêveuses à nos bras." . . and they whisper "les mots spéciaux et tout bas."

GEORGE MOORE.

THE singers of serenades
Whisper their faded vows
Unto fair listening maids
Under the singing boughs.

Tircis, Aminte, are there,
Clitandre is over-long,
And Damis for many a fair
Tyrant makes many a song.

Their short vests, silken and bright,
 Their long pale silken trains,
Their elegance of delight,
 Twine soft blue silken chains.

And the mandolines and they,
 Faintlier breathing, swoon
Into the rose and grey
 Ecstasy of the moon.

II.

DANS L'ALLÉE.

As in the age of shepherd king and queen,
Painted and frail amid her nodding bows,
Under the sombre branches, and between
The green and mossy garden-ways she goes,
With little mincing airs one keeps to pet
A darling and provoking perroquet.
Her long-trained robe is blue, the fan she holds
With fluent fingers girt with heavy rings,
So vaguely hints of vague erotic things
That her eye smiles, musing among its folds.
— Blonde too, a tiny nose, a rosy mouth,
Artful as that sly patch that makes more sly,
In her divine unconscious pride of youth,
The slightly simpering sparkle of the eye.

III.

CYTHÈRE.

By favourable breezes fanned,
A trellised arbour is at hand
To shield us from the summer airs ;

The scent of roses, fainting sweet,
Afloat upon the summer heat,
Blends with the perfume that she wears.

True to the promise her eyes gave,
She ventures all, and her mouth rains
A dainty fever through my veins ;

And Love, fulfilling all things, save
Hunger, we 'scape, with sweets and ices,
The folly of Love's sacrifices.

IV.

LES INDOLENTS.

BAH! spite of Fate, that says us nay,
Suppose we die together, eh?

— A rare conclusion you discover!

— What's rare is good. Let us die so,
Like lovers in Boccaccio.

— Hi! hi! hi! you fantastic lover!

— Nay, not fantastic. If you will,
Fond, surely irreproachable.

Suppose, then, that we die together?

— Good sir, your jests are fitlier told
Than when you speak of love or gold.

Why speak at all, in this glad weather?

Whereat, behold them once again,
Tircis beside his Dorimène,

Not far from two blithe rustic rovers,

For some caprice of idle breath
Deferring a delicious death.

Hi! hi! hi! what fantastic lovers!

FANTOCHES.

S CARAMOUCHE waves a threatening hand
To Pulcinella, and they stand,
Two shadows, black against the moon.

The old doctor of Bologna pries
For simples with impassive eyes,
And mutters o'er a magic rune.

The while his daughter, scarce half-dressed,
Glides slyly 'neath the trees, in quest
Of her bold pirate lover's sail;

Her pirate from the Spanish main,
Whose passion thrills her in the pain
Of the loud languorous nightingale.

VI.

PANTOMIME. .

PIERROT, no sentimental swain,
Washes a pâté down again
With furtive flagons, white and red.

Cassandre, to chasten his content,
Greets with a tear of sentiment
His nephew disinherited.

That blackguard of a Harlequin
Pirouettes, and plots to win
His Columbine that flits and flies.

Columbine dreams, and starts to find
A sad heart sighing in the wind,
And in her heart a voice that sighs.

VII.

L'AMOUR PAR TERRE.

THE wind the other evening overthrew
The little Love who smiled so mockingly
Down that mysterious alley, so that we,
Remembering, mused thereon a whole day through.

The wind has overthrown him! The poor stone
Lies scattered to the breezes. It is sad
To see the lonely pedestal, that had
The artist's name, scarce visible, alone,

Oh! it is sad to see the pedestal
Left lonely! and in dream I seem to hear
Prophetic voices whisper in my ear
The lonely and despairing end of all.

Oh! it is sad! And thou, hast thou not found
One heart-throb for the pity, though thine eye
Lights at the gold and purple butterfly
Brightening the littered leaves upon the ground?

VIII.

À CLYMÈNE.

MYSTICAL strains unheard,
A song without a word,
Dearest, because thine eyes,
Pale as the skies,

Because thy voice, remote
As the far clouds that float
Veiling for me the whole
Heaven of the soul,

Because the stately scent
Of thy swan's whiteness, blent
With the white lily's bloom
Of thy perfume,

Ah! because thy dear love,
The music breathed above
By angels halo-crowned,
Odour and sound,

Hath, in my subtle heart,
With some mysterious art
Transposed thy harmony,
So let it be!

THE EIGHT PRECEDING LYRICS TRANSLATED
BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

IX.

CLAIR DE LUNE.

I.

YOUR soul is as a moonlit landscape fair,
Peopled with maskers delicate and dim,
That play on lutes and dance and have an air
Of being sad in their fantastic trim.

The while they celebrate in minor strain
Triumphant love, effective enterprise,
They have an air of knowing all is vain,—
And through the quiet moonlight their songs rise,

The melancholy moonlight, sweet and lone,
That makes to dream the birds upon the tree,
And in their polished basins of white stone
The fountains tall to sob with ecstasy.

GERTRUDE HALL.

*This is like a plaintive song: it is
not, churning and "trany"*

How like a well-kept garden is your soul,
With bergomask and solemn minuet!
Playing upon the lute! The dancers seem
But sad, beneath their strange habiliments.
While, in the minor key, their songs extol
The victor Love, and life's sweet blandishments,
Their looks belie the burden of their lays,
The songs that mingle with the still moon-beams.
So strange, so beautiful, the pallid rays;
Making the birds among the branches dream,
And sob with ecstasy the slender jets,

The fountains tall that leap upon the lawns
Amid the garden gods, the marble fauns.

JOHN GRAY.

LA BONNE CHANSON.

(1870.)

AUBADE.

Avant que tu ne t'en ailles.

BEFORE the flood of day prevails,
O pale star of morning prime!
—A thousand quails
Are singing, singing in the thyme.—

Turn on me thy lingering spark,
Me whose eyes are filled with love;
—Lo! the lark
Flutters in the heavens above.—

Turn thy look, bathed in the bright
Blue splendour of the shimmering morn;
—What delight
Dwells in fields of yellow corn!—

Till my thought shines through and through
Sweetest dreams . . . so far, so far!
—O the dew
On every blade of grass a star!

Sweetest dreams that dower the chaste
Slumbers of my dearest one . . .
—Haste, oh haste,
For yonder comes the golden sun!

W. J. ROBERTSON.

ROMANCES SANS PAROLES.

(1874.)

I.

Il pleure dans mon cœur.

TEARS in my heart that weeps,
Like the rain upon the town.
What drowsy languor steeps
In tears my heart that weeps?

O sweet sound of the rain
On earth and on the roofs!
For a heart's weary pain
O the song of the rain!

Vain tears, vain tears, my heart!
What, none hath done thee wrong?
Tears without reason start,
From my disheartened heart.

This is the weariest woe,
O heart, of love and hate
Too weary, not to know
Why thou hast all this woe.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

II.

THERE are tears in my heart,
There is rain in the town;
What bodeth this smart
In my languorous heart?

O soft noise of the rain
Over earth, on the roof!
For a heart sick with pain
O the song of the rain!

Tears with no reason
In a heart out of heart.
And none has wrought treason?
This grief has no reason.

'Tis indeed the worst woe,
With no love and no hate
In one's heart, not to know
Why one's heart has such woe.

MICHAEL FIELD.

GREEN.

LEAVES and branches, flowers and fruits are here;
And here my heart, which throbs alone for thee.
Ah! do not wound my heart with those two dear
White hands, but take the poor gift tenderly.

I come, all covered with the dews of night
The morning breeze has pearled upon my face.
Let my fatigue, at thy feet, in thy sight,
Dream through the moments of its sweet solace.

With thy late kisses ringing, let my head
Roll in blest indolence on thy young breast;
To lull the tempest thy caresses bred,
And soothe my senses with a little rest.

JOHN GRAY.

LE PIANO QUE BAISE

THE piano that a slender hand has kissed
Shines rose and grey in the grey evening mist;
While, with light murmur as of wings that beat,
An ancient tender melody and sweet
Treads hushed, an almost timid wanderer,
Through the boudoir long odorous of Her.

Ah, what is this that as a cradle now
Lulls my poor heart?—how tenderly and slow!
What would you with me, dainty song? and, ah!
What would you, hesitating sweet refrain,
So quickly by the window dead again,
The window on the garden just ajar?

A. BERNARD MIALL.

SAGESSE.

(1881.)

MON DIEU M'A DIT:

GOD has spoken: Love me,
Son, thou must; Oh see
My broken side; my heart,
its rays refulgent shine;
My feet, insulted, stabbed,
that Mary bathes with brine
Of bitter tears; my sad arms,
helpless, son, for thee;

With thy sins heavy; and my hands;
thou seest the rod;
Thou seest the nails, the sponge,
the gall; and all my pain
Must teach thee love, amidst a world
where flesh doth reign,
My flesh alone, my blood,
my voice, the voice of God.

Say, have I not loved thee,
loved thee to death,
O brother in my Father,
in the Spirit son?

Say, as the word is written,
 is my work not done?
Thy deepest woe have I not sobbed
 with struggling breath?

Has not thy sweat of anguished nights
 from all my pores in pain
Of blood dripped, piteous friend,
 who seekest me in vain?

JOHN GRAY.

PARSIFAL.

C ONQUERED the flower-maidens, and the wide embrace
Of their round proffered arms, that tempt the virgin boy;
Conquered the trickling of their babbling tongues; the coy
Back glances, and the mobile breasts of subtle grace;

Conquered the Woman Beautiful, the fatal charm
Of her hot breast, the music of her babbling tongue;
Conquered the gate of Hell, into the gate the young
Man passes, with the heavy trophy at his arm,

The holy Javelin that pierced the Heart of God.
He heals the dying king, he sits upon the throne,
King, and high priest of that great gift, the living Blood.

In robe of gold the youth adores the glorious Sign
Of the green goblet, worships the mysterious Wine.
And oh! the chime of children's voices in the dome.

JOHN GRAY.

JADIS ET NAGUÈRE.

(1884.)

THE ART OF POETRY.

O H music above everything!
And therefore take for choice the Uneven;
Nothing that clogs or chains the wing
In vague and vaporous flight to Heaven!

Yet choose your words from the vocal throng
Not too easily apprehended:
Nothing more dear than the gray song
In which the Cloudy and Clear lie blended.

Such is the tremulous flush of noon,
So through the veil bright eyes shoot lustre,
Such is the autumn sky aswoon
With stars that swim in a hazy cluster!

Tone we must have and all else scorn;
Only shade, no colour, no splendour:
O tone! the tender sole love-blender
Of dream with dream and flute with horn!

Far from the murderous Epigram fly,
From cruel Wit and unclean Laughter,
That bring the tears to Heaven's blue eye . . .
Stale garlic from the kitchen-rafter!

Take Eloquence and wring his neck!
Right it is, when the Muses revel,
To keep these frolicsome jades in check,
Lest unawares they run to the devil!

Oh who can tell the wrongs of Rhyme?
What deaf child was the first to chink it,
Tinsel that rings, to the true-gold-chime,
Hollow and false as a twopenny trinket?

Oh music ever and evermore!
So let your verse take wings and follow
The soul that seeks, on a sunnier shore,
Fresh climes, fresh loves, like the flying swallow.

So let your Muse, in the morning prime,
Fling to the cool crisp wind her fetters,
Flowered with the fragrance of mint and thyme . . .
And all the rest is . . . only Letters!

W. J. ROBERTSON.



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WHILE THE BIBELOT for 1898 will be carried out on the same literary lines as in the past, it is the Editor's intention to give a somewhat larger preference to privately printed or very scarce editions. During the year selections are now in contemplation from works little known by William Morris, A. C. Swinburne, and D. G. Rossetti which more than ever will render THE BIBELOT indispensable to the book-lover.

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The Literary World,
November 27, 1897.



The BiBelof

I^N continuance of our re-issue of William Morris's prose contributions to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*,¹ the subject of his earliest criticism comes to us as something in the nature of a 'find.'

Printed exactly forty-two years ago, (March, 1856), unsigned, in a magazine of such brief duration, it has, apparently, escaped the notice of the keenest Browning bibliographer alive. Neither Mr. Thomas J. Wise, (*Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*), nor Mr. G. W. Cooke, (*A Guide-book to the Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning*), mention Morris as a disciple of the master: they do mention a host of lesser lights—critical lamps long since extinguished! One may suppose that the inaccessibility of the review as well as its anonymity, had much to do with their silence.

It is, then, well done to recover this essay for students of these two great poets.

'Twas a tribute of appreciation and love
from the younger to the elder brother in
Art; and, written in the enthusiasm of
his splendid youth, it might have been
thrown off to-day, so sound, so satisfying,
so essentially for us and with us are its
affirmations.

1 The Hollow Land, A Tale by William Morris,
appeared in our last July-August Bibelot. Since
then Mr. H. B. Forman's exhaustive bibliography—
The Books of William Morris, (London, Frank
Hollings, 1897),—has fully justified the statement
that The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine con-
tained 'a body of Morris's inedited prose . . .
not to be easily ignored or lightly set aside.'



FOR APRIL :

THE POETRY OF MICHELANGELO
BY WALTER PATER.

MEN AND WOMEN. BY
ROBERT BROWNING.

A Review by
WILLIAM MORRIS.

*"There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished !
Take them, Love, the book and me together :
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also."*

ONE WORD MORE, TO E. B. B.

MEN AND WOMEN. || BY || ROBERT BROWNING. || IN
TWO VOLUMES. || VOL. I [VOL. II.] || LONDON: || CHAPMAN
AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY. || 1855.

VOLUME I. Love among the Ruins; A Lovers' Quarrel;
Evelyn Hope Up at a Villa—down in the City; A
Woman's Last Word; Fra Lippo Lippi; A Toccata of
Galuppi's; By the Fireside; Any Wife to Any Husband;
An Epistle containing the Strange Medical Experience
of Karshish, the Arab Physician; Mesmerism; A Sere-
nade at the Villa; My Star; Instans Tyrannus; A Pretty
Woman; "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came";
Respectability; A Light Woman; The Statue and the
Bust; Love in a Life; Life in a Love; How it strikes a
Contemporary; The Last Ride Together; The Patriot—
An old Story; Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha; Bishop
Blougram's Apology; Memorabilia.

VOLUME II. Andrea del Sarto; Before; After; In Three
Days; In a Year; Old Pictures in Florence; In a
Balcony (Three parts, afterwards reprinted as a one act
drama); Saul; "De Gustibus —"; Women and Roses;
Protus; Holy-Cross Day; The Guardian-Angel; Cleon;
The Twins; Popularity; The Heretic's Tragedy; Two
in the Campagna; A Grammarian's Funeral; One Way
of Love; Another Way of Love; "Transcendentalism";
Misconceptions; One Word More, To E. B. B.

Men and Women was never reprinted separately. The
Poems it contains were incorporated in the succeeding
collected editions. With the exception of *In a Balcony*
they were distributed under the respective headings of
*'Dramatic Lyrics, 'Dramatic Romances and Men and
Women.*

(Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century,
Edited by W. R. Nicoll and Thomas J. Wise.
London, 1895. Vol. I, pp. 373-376.)

"MEN AND WOMEN."

BY ROBERT BROWNING.

I AM not going to attempt a regular classification of Robert Browning's "Men and Women;" yet the poems do fall naturally into some order, or rather some of them go pretty much together; and, as I have no great space, I will go through those that do so fall together, saying little or nothing about the others.

The three that strike me first, are "The Epistle of Karshish," "Cleon," and "Bishop Blougram's Apology." They have all three to do with belief and doubt, with the thoughts and fancies, and strange longings that circle round these; they are dramatic too, not expressing, except quite incidentally, the poet's own thoughts. "Cleon," and the "Epistle of Karshish," are especially dramatic, and are very considerably alike: they both tell of the desires and doubts of men out of Christianity, and in the days when Christianity was the true faith of a very few unknown men, not a mere decent form to all the nations.

Karshish is an Arab physician, a man of science; Cleon is poet, painter, sculptor. The Arab is the more genial of the two,

less selfish, somewhat deeper too, I think; Cleon, with his intense appreciation of beauty, even with his long life spent in producing that beauty, is yet intensely selfish; he despises utterly the common herd; he would bring about, if he could, a most dreary aristocracy of intellect, where the commoners would be bound hand and foot, mere slaves to the great men, and their great lordly minds, not loyal freemen, honouring the heroes; he plumes himself, too, on being no less great than his fathers, greater even than they, saying:

" Marvel not,
We of these latter days, with greater mind
Than our forerunners, since more composite,
Look not so great (beside their simple way),
To a judge who only sees one way at once,
One mind-point, and no other at a time;
Compares the small part of a man of us
With some whole man of the heroic age,
Great in his way—not ours, nor meant for ours,
And ours is greater, had we skill to know."

Saying wrongly, too, as I am sure, for it was little more than mere restless vanity that made him try to master so many things, instead of giving up his mind to one, as the grand elders did.

MEN AND WOMEN

Yes, he is selfish—so selfish that he can see little joy in those powers of creation which he possessed; the king had said, in his letter, that though he, a mere king, would die utterly, yet it would not be so with Cleon, for his pictures, poems, statues, would live after him, he would live through them. Cleon says the king stumbles at mere words; that the reality is otherwise:

"What? dost thou verily trip upon a word,
Confound the accurate view of what joy is,
(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine,)
With feeling joy? confound the knowing how
And showing how to live (my faculty)
With actually living? Otherwise,
Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?
I know the joy of kingship: well—thou art king!"

He says too, that this same appreciation of beauty, of enjoyment, all the knowledge that he has, all his desires, so much finer than those of other men, only make the fear of death bitterer than it otherwise would be:

"Every day my sense of joy
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
In power and insight) more enlarged, more keen,
While every day my hairs fall more and more,
My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase,

The horror quickening still from year to year,
The consummation coming past escape,
When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy."

Till at last, in his agony, fierce words are
wrung from the calm proud man; he cannot
help it—he cries out,

"It is so horrible,
I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state reveal'd to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,
To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us,
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make sweet the life at large,
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst then as the worm into the fly,
Who while a worm still, wants his wings. But no!
Zeus has not yet reveal'd it; and, alas!
He must have done so, were it possible!"

And from this agony he comes down again
to a kind of careless despair, and ends by
saying just a little, contemptuously enough,
of Paulus and his new doctrines; the
cursed pride of knowledge lowering him so,
that he even seems to be jealous that the
king has sent presents and enquiries to
Paulus also, a barbarian, one circumcised;
so that about the doctrines of Paulus, he
says:

"And (as I gathered from a by-stander)
His doctrines could be held by no sane man."

Poor Cleon! he was not wont to accept things on hearsay; yet now so has his pride lowered him; and we must leave him and his longings for Karshish the Arab.

Karshish is, as I said, a better man than Cleon; a simpler man, one with great knowledge, always thirsting after more, and brave in his pursuit of it; yet, on the whole, I think, kindly, and not puffed up with that knowledge. He writes from Jerusalem to his old master, to tell him how he has seen Lazarus; yet he is half fearful that he will seem ridiculous, unphilosophical, and does not like to acknowledge at first, even to himself, till he grows warmer from the longings that stir within him, what impression has been made on him; and he breaks off now and then to talk about his knowledge; yet he comes back to this always at last, for he cannot help it; and so he writes; very beautifully does he tell of the perfect faith of Lazarus, of his love of God and man, nay, of beasts, nay, of the very flowers; of his resignation and obedience to God through everything; of his strange clear second-

sight; yearningly does he dwell on all this, excusing himself from ridicule now and then, by saying, "yet the man was mad." He knows how little all knowledge is, how it can never be perfected through all the generations; but he longs to love perfectly; his God is different from Lazarus's God; his idea of Him is so different, that he mentions with shuddering horror that which Lazarus had told him; "that he, Lazarus, who stood there in the flesh, had seen God in the flesh too;" in horror; yet if it only could be true, that story told by the madman!

"The very God! think, Abib, dost thou think?
 So, the All-great, were the All-Loving too;
 So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
 Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
 Face, my hands fashion'd, see it in myself.
 Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
 But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
 And thou must love me who have died for thee!
 The madman saith he said so: it is strange."

You see, too, he does not say, as Cleon did to his dream of Heaven, "it is not possible;" he only says, "it is strange."

It is all gloriously told; here is something beside our present question which I quote

MEN AND WOMEN

for its beauty; Karshish's first meeting with Lazarus:

"I met him thus—

I cross'd a ridge of short sharp broken hills,
Like an old lion's cheek-tooth—out there came
A moon made like a face, with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing:
'Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I."

Concerning "Bishop Blougram's Apology"

I can say little here, it embraces so many things; the Bishop's interlocutor, "Gigadibs, the literary man," comes in only as an objector, or little else; he is a man without fixed faith; the bishop is one who is trying to "believe that he believes," and is succeeding, I think, pretty well: for my part I dislike him thoroughly, yet he says many true things, as Browning says in the Epilogue; "he said true things, but called them by wrong names."

He agrees too with Cleon concerning the unpleasantness of the possession of the creative power. It is of no use to *him*, he says; he is more selfish even than Cleon, and not nearly so interesting: he is tolerably well content with the present state of things

as regards himself, has no such very deep longings, and is not so much troubled with doubts probably as even he says he is. Browning says of him, "For Blougram, he believed, say half he spoke."

I will go on to the next band that seem to go together, those about art, namely; they are Andrea del Sarto, Fra Lippo Lippi, Old Pictures at Florence, A Toccata of Galuppi, and Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha.

Andrea del Sarto, and Fra Lippo Lippi are a good deal alike, only the first has more about the man, the second about the art he lives in. What a joy it is to have these men brought up before us, made alive again, though they have passed away from the earth so long ago; made alive, seeming indeed not as they might very likely have seemed to us, the lesser men, had we lived in their times; but rescued from the judgment of the world, "which charts us all in its broad blacks or whites"—and shown to us as they really were.

Think of Andrea del Sarto sitting there in Florence, looking over to Fiesole, trying to forget all the shame, all the weariness, to forget the pain of them at least, to live for

one half-hour in the present; yet so, that the past and the future may mingle with it very quietly, like the long weeds that the stream sways with it. And Lucrezia is sitting by him, Lucrezia, who he knows is not worthy of his love—no, not even of *his* love, the breaker of troth, the runaway; and yet he goes on loving her nevertheless, she has wound her toils about him so. Oh! true story, told so often, in so many ways. And it shall all go into a picture for the wearied man resting there:

“The whole seems to fall into a shape,
As if I saw alike my work and self,
And all that I was bound to be and do,
A twilight-piece.”

And how calmly he can talk of himself and his art, his great success that was rather a bitter failure to him now:

“I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don’t know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smear’d,
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,
Yet do much less, so much less, some one says,
(I know his name, no matter) so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia! I am judged,

There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vex'd, beating, stuff'd and stopp'd-up brain,
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough,
 Though they come back and cannot tell the world."

Calmly he speaks of the wrong she had been to him, of what she might have been; calmly of his life in France, and of his sin even when he fled from thence a very thief: and she, in spite of all, is rather in a hurry to get away, is rather bored by his talk, howsoever loving, for her "cousin" waits for her below: and so you can almost see the flutter of her dress through the doorway, almost hear her feet down the stairs, and the greeting of the bad woman without a heart with that "cousin." Almost? nay, quite.

Then for Fra Lippo Lippi. He, found in questionable haunts by the police, first awes them somewhat by mention of his patron's name, Cosimo de Medici; then, being a man with wrongs and one who must speak to somebody, he tells the officer the very simple story of his life, and his grievance:

MEN AND WOMEN

"Rub all out! well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since—
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds.

"And yet the old schooling sticks—the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still. 'It's Art's decline, my son!
You're not of the true painters, great and old:
Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find:
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer—
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third.'"

"I'm not the third then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they're the likeliest to know!
They, with their Latin? so I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them."

This too is an often-told tale, to be told
many times again I fear before the world is
done with. To this same officer he vindicates
himself: everything almost is worth painting,
surely it is best (whatever may be good) to
paint everything as well as possible:

"You be judge!

You speak no Latin more than I, belike—
However, you're my man, you've seen the world—
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!"

"What's it all about?

To be pass'd o'er, despised? or dwelt upon,

Wonder'd at? oh, this last of course, you say;
 But why not do as well as say,—paint these
 Just as they are, careless of what comes of it?
 God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
 To let a truth slip. Don't object, 'His works
 Are here already—nature is complete:
 Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
 There's no advantage! you must beat her, then!'
 For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love
 First, when we see them painted, things we have pass'd
 Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see;
 And so they are better, painted—better to us,
 Which is the same thing. Art was given for that—
 God uses us to help each other so,
 Lending our minds out."

It is very grand, this intense love of art;
 and I suppose that those who cannot paint,
 and who therefore cannot feel quite the same
 herein, have nevertheless sometimes had a
 sick longing for the power to do so, without
 being able to give any reason for it, such a
 longing as I think is felt for nothing else
 under the sun,—at least for no other power.

And so we leave Fra Lippo Lippi, not
 certainly feeling altogether disgusted with
 the man, in spite of his sins; you see, he
 had not a very good education, and yet is
 not so selfish as one might have expected
 him to be either.

No less great than these two is "Old Pictures at Florence;" beautiful in the beginning, that gazing on Florence from the garden, in spring-tide; beautiful and very true, that indignant vindication of the early mediæval painters; that comparison of their imperfect painting, with the perfect sculpture of the Greeks, perfect, but not so good as the other; for the other was higher in its aim, higher in the thoughts that it called up in men's minds; higher too, that in its humility it gave more sympathy to poor struggling, falling men. Here is a stanza or two of that vindication:—

"Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
Wherever an outline weakens and wanes
Till the latest life in the painting stops,
Stands one whom each fainter pulse-tick pains!
One, wishful each scrap should clutch its brick,
Each tinge not wholly escape the plaster,
A lion who dies of an ass's kick,
The wrong'd great soul of an ancient master.

"For oh, this world and the wrong it does!
They are safe in heaven with their backs to it,
The Michaels and Rafaels, you hum and buzz
Round the works of, you of the little wit!
Do their eyes contract to the earth's old scope,
Now that they see God face to face,

And have all attain'd to be poets, I hope?

'Tis their holiday now, in any case.

"Much they reckon of your praise and you!

But the wronged great souls—can they be quit
Of a world where all their work is to do?"

These are the three that have most to do
with artists and painting. Then come two
concerning music, "A Toccata of Galuppi,"
and "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha."

There is not so much to say about the
first of these, it seems to have been written
principally for the music; yet I think
Galuppi's music itself could not have beaten
it, played though it was between the sea and
the palaces, it rings so gloriously throughout;
not one line in it falls from beginning to end,
from the first:

"Oh, Galuppi Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!

I could hardly misconceive you; it would prove me
deaf and blind;

But although I give you credit, 'tis with such a heavy
mind!"

to the last:

"Dust and ashes!" so you creak it, and I want the
heart to scold.

Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become
of all the gold

Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly
and grown old."

Worthy to go with this for music is "Master Hugues;" exquisite in melody, it is beautiful also in its pictures, true in its meaning. As to its melody, there is to me something perfectly wonderful in the piling up of the words from verse to verse. The thing fascinates me, though I cannot tell where the wonder is;—but it *is* there; the first stanza is almost as good as any for this music:

"Hist, but a word, fair and soft!

Forth and be judged, Master Hugues!

Answer the question I've put you so oft—

What do you mean by your mountainous fugues?

See, we're alone in the loft."

Then these others go together in my mind; "Before" and "After," "Childe Roland to the dark tower came," "The Patriot," "A light Woman," and perhaps some others; but these will do. They are all more concerned with action than thought, and are wholly dramatical.

Here is the first stanza from "The Patriot:"—

"It was roses, roses, all the way,

With myrtle mixed in my path like mad.

The house-roofs seem'd to heave and sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day!"

The poem is very short, yet very attractive, somehow; the man's life is shown wonderfully, though the poem is so short; how he knew before, when he liberated these people, that they would not be faithful to him for long, yet, nevertheless, went on hoping against hope! He is not vain, for he knows he could not have done other than he did; yet he knows he has done well, and so comforts himself, thinking of the next world:—

"Thus I enter'd Brescia, and thus I go!

In such triumphs people have dropp'd down dead.

'Thou paid by the world—what dost thou owe

Me?' God might have question'd: but now instead,
'Tis God shall requite! I am safer so."

Yet, to the reader, it is very sad to read this "old story;" and I think also it was bitter to him, in spite of all.

Telling lies for truth's sake, acting unfaithfully for faith's sake, are what is treated of in the "Light Woman;" it is told, slight sketch though it is, in a masterly way; perhaps we shall hear something more about it soon, judging from the last two lines:

MEN AND WOMEN

"And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand!"

"Before" and "After," are rather parts
of the same poem, than separate poems.
"Before," written in a splendid fighting
measure, is spoken by a by-stander, just
before a duel: listen, here!

"Why, you would not bid men, sunk in such a slough,
Strike no arm out further, stick and stink as now,
Leaving right and wrong to settle the embroilment,
Heaven with snaky hell, in torture and entoilment?"

"Which of them's the culprit, how must he conceive
God's the queen he caps to, laughing in his sleeve!
'Tis but decent to profess one's self beneath her—
Still, one must not be too much in earnest either.

"Better sin the whole sin, sure that God observes,
Then go live his life out! life will try his nerves,
When the sky which noticed all, makes no disclosure,
And the earth keeps up her terrible composure.

"Let him pace at pleasure, past the walls of rose,
Pluck their fruits when grape-trees graze him as he
goes;
For he 'gins to guess the purpose of the garden,
With the sly mute thing beside there for a warden.

"What's the leopard-dog-thing, constant to his side,
A leer and lie in every eye on its obsequious hide?
When will come an end of all the mock obeisance,
And the price appear that pays for this misfeasance?"

Yes, truly so! the one poisoning sin in a man's life, never to leave him in the midst of his dearly-bought pleasures; he has gone wrong once, and the chance of his turning back is desperate indeed; all his life is a lie now, with that terrible unrepented sin lying on him. Did ever any of you read Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter?" Then for his adversary:—

"So much for the culprit? Who's the martyr'd man?
 Let him bear one stroke more, for be sure he can.
 Him that strove thus evil's lump with good to leaven,
 Let him give his blood at last and get his heaven."

Yet with neither wronger nor wronged has it come to this yet; death may equalize it somewhat: so in "After," this has indeed happened. I quote it entire without comment:

"Take the cloak from his face, and at first
 Let the corpse do its worst—
 How he lies in the rights of a man!
 Death has done all death can.
 And absorb'd in the new life he leads,
 He recks not, he heeds
 Nor his wrong nor my vengeance—both strike
 On his senses alike,
 And are lost in the solemn and strange
 Surprise of the change.

MEN AND WOMEN

Ha! what avails death to erase
His offence, my disgrace?
I would we were boys as of old
In the field, by the fold;—
His outrage, God's patience, man's scorn,
Were so easily borne.
I stand here now,—he lies in his place—
Cover the face."

I think these two among the most perfect short poems that Robert Browning has written, as perfect in their way as "Evelyn Hope" among the love-poems. "Childe Roland,"—how grand that is! some reviewer thinks it an "allegory," and rates the poet for not having told us what happened to Childe Roland inside the "round, squat turret."

Well, it may in some sort be an allegory, for in a certain sense everything is so, or almost everything that is done on this earth. But that is not its first meaning; neither, as some people think, was it written for the sake of the fearful pictures merely, or even principally; they, grand as they are, the grandest things of the kind that I have ever read, are yet only a means to an end; for the poet's real design was to show us a brave man doing his duty, making his way

on to his point through all dreadful things. What do all these horrors matter to him? he must go on, they cannot stop him; he will be slain certainly, who knows by what unheard-of death; yet he can leave all this in God's hands, and go forward, for it will all come right at the end. And has not Robert Browning shown us this well? Do you not feel as you read, a strange sympathy for the lonely knight? so very, very lonely; not allowed even the fellowship of kindly memories:

"I shut my eyes and turn'd them on my heart,
 As a man calls for wine before he fights,
 I ask'd one draught of earlier, happier sights
 Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
 Think first, fight afterwards—the soldiers' art:
 One taste of the old times sets all to rights!

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
 Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
 Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
 An arm in mine to fix me to the place
 That way he used. Alas! one night's disgrace!
 Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Better this present than a past like that—
 Back therefore to my darkening path again."

Yet, for all this utter loneliness, for all these horrors, so subtly has the consummate poet

wrought, through the stately flow of the magnificent rhythm, that we do not feel desponding, but rather triumphant, at the glorious end; an end so glorious, that the former life, whatever it was, was well worth living with that to crown it; and it was well too for the poet to leave us there, so that we see not the mere struggle of physical courage, or the mere groans and tears of suffering humanity under those things which are to be borne indeed, but hardly ever very calmly, hardly ever very resignedly; but now "Childe Roland" passes straight from our eyes to the place where the true and brave live for ever; and as far as we go, his life flows out triumphantly with that blast he blew.

And was it not well to leave us with that snatch of old song ringing through our ears like the very horn-blast that echoed all about the windings of that dismal valley of death?

"I saw them and I knew them all; and yet
Dauntless the stag-horn to my lips I set,
And blew: '*Childe Roland to the dark tower came.*' "

In my own heart I think I love this poem the best of all in these volumes.

And yet I scarcely know; for this and all the others seem to me but a supplement to the love-poems, even as it is in all art, in all life; love I mean of some sort; and that life or art where this is not the case, is but a wretched mistake after all.

And in these love-poems of Robert Browning there is one thing that struck me particularly; that is their intense, unmixed love; love for the sake of love, and if that is not obtained, disappointment comes, falling-off, misery. I suppose the same kind of thing is to be found in all very earnest love-poetry, but I think more in him than in almost anybody else.

"Any wife to any husband," "The last ride together,"—read them, and I think you will see what I mean. I cannot say it clearly, it cannot be said so but in verse; love for love's sake, the only true love, I must say.—Pray Christ some of us attain to it before we die!

Yet after all I am afraid I shall be able to say less about these love-poems than the others.

"Evelyn Hope" is quite perfect in its way; Tennyson himself has written nothing

more beautiful; it is easy to be understood; very simple, everybody *must* like it: so full of faith and quiet manly tenderness, hopeful and brave; a very jewel set in the gold of the poet's crown. I must quote a little:

"I claim you still, for my own love's sake,
Delay'd it may be for more lives yet
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

"But the time will come,—at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant, I shall say,
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geraniums' red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

"I have lived, I shall say, so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gain'd me the gains of various men,
Ransack'd the ages, spoil'd the climes;
Yet one thing, one in my soul's full scope,
Either I miss'd or itself miss'd me —
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

"I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;
My heart seem'd full as it could hold—
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold:

So, hush! I will give you this leaf to keep;
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand.
 There, that is our secret! go to sleep;
 You will wake, and remember, and understand."

Do you not see them there, in the darkened room,—the wise, learned, world-worn man hanging over the fair, dead girl, who "perhaps had scarcely heard his name?" Coming close to "Evelyn Hope" is "A Woman's Last Word," and almost as beautiful as that:

"Be a god and hold me
 With a charm—
 Be a man, and fold me
 With thine arm!

"Teach me, only teach, Love!
 As I ought
 I will speak thy speech, Love,
 Think thy thought.

"Meet, if thou require it,
 Both demands,
 Laying flesh and spirit
 In thy hands!

"That shall be to-morrow,
 Not to-night:
 I must bury sorrow
 Out of sight.

MEN AND WOMEN

"Must a little weep, Love!
Foolish me!
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee."

Is it not perfect in thought as in music?
and does it not illustrate what I said just
now about the intense passion of these
poems?

So does this next one that I come to,
"By the Fireside." It is the history of a
life of love, that life which first began by
the chapel there in Italy; all things to this
man, past, present, and to come, are centred
in that one fact:

"I am named and known by that hour's feat,
There took my station and degree.
So grew my own small life complete
As nature obtain'd her best of me—
One born to love you, sweet!"

It reminds me a good deal of Tennyson in
parts, of "Maud" especially; but I suppose
that is the effect of its melody; it is all
told in such sweet, half-mournful music, as
though in compassion to those who have
not obtained this love, who will not obtain
it while they live on earth, though they may
in heaven.

Such love too is in it for the beautiful
country where the new life came to him:

"Oh! woman-country, woo'd, not wed;
Loved all the more by earth's male-lands,
Laid to their hearts instead."

Such pictures of the fair autumn-tide.

"Oh! the sense of the yellow mountain-flowers,
And the thorny balls, each three in one,
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers,
For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,
These early November hours."

I like it one of the best of all.

"The Statue and the Bust" is a story, a
sad story too. Unlawful love that was never
acted, but thought only, thought through life;
yet were the lovers none the less sinners,
therefore; rather the more, in that they were
cowards; for in thought they indulged their
love freely, and no fear of God, no hate of
wrong or love of right restrained them, but
only a certain cowardly irresolution. So
Robert Browning thinks:

"So! while these wait the trump of doom!
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?"

MEN AND WOMEN

"Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder

"Surely they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints, who, row on row,

"Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since the end of life being manifest,
He had cut his way through the world to this."

I cannot tell the story, you must read it;
it is one of the best in the two volumes: the
rhythm so wonderfully suited to the story, it
draws you along through the days and years
that the lovers passed in delay, so quietly,
swiftly, smoothly.

Here is another, "The last ride together;"
one disappointed in his best hopes of love,
looking on the whole world struggling so,
with calm hopeless eyes; so calm, though
not altogether miserable. There is no need
for him to struggle now he thinks; he has
failed; that is enough, failed as all others
fail: he is not worse off than his fellows.
Meanwhile she is riding with him; the
present is somewhat blissful; moreover he
says:

"Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate
 My being; had I signed the bond—
 Still one must lead some life beyond,
 Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
 This foot once planted on the goal,
 This glory-garland round my soul,
 Could I descry such? Try and test!
 I sink back shuddering from the quest—
 Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
 Now, Heaven, and she are beyond this ride."

Then over him comes a strange feeling—
 he does not know—it is all so blissful, so
 calm: "She has not spoke so long,"—
 suppose it be that it was Heaven now at
 this moment.

"What if we still ride on, we two,
 With life for ever old, yet new,
 Changed not in kind but in degree,
 The instant made eternity—
 And Heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, for ever ride?"

"In a Balcony" is a strange poem, hard to
 make out at first; and for my part, I am not
 at all sure that I apprehend it rightly.

It seems to me that Constance and
 Norbert, being cowardly, did at first intend
 merely to deceive the queen, then, that
 Constance, moved by the poor woman's

joy at her supposed lover, and by her unexpected declaration of affection for herself, really intended to sacrifice her love to the queen; but that Norbert's sick fear, his wild passionate terror, overcomes her, and their love is declared, with who knows what fate in store for them; but it is all intricate and difficult—like human action.

"Women and roses" I must mention, seeing that some reviewer thinks it impossible to solve the riddle of it. I will try, not thinking it so very difficult either. Some man thinking, dreaming of women, they fall into three bands—those that have been, those that are, those that will be; but with neither of these bands can he feel entire sympathy. He cannot enter into the heart of them; their very vividness of face and form draws his heart away from their souls, and so they seem to him cold and unloving.

It certainly does not sound very well as I have put it; in fact it does not often help poems much to *solve* them, because there are in poems so many exquisitely small and delicate turns of thought running through their music, and along with it, that cannot be done into prose, any more than the

infinite variety of form, and shadow, and colour in a great picture can be rendered by a coloured woodcut.

Which (in the case of the poem) is caused, I suppose, by its being concentrated thought.

I quote some of this poem ("Women and Roses") :—

" I dream of a red-rose tree,
And which of its roses three
Is the dearest rose to me?
Round and round, like a dance of snow
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go
Floating the women, faded for ages,
Sculptured in stone, on the poets pages.
Then follow the women, fresh and gay,
Living and loving, and loved to-day.
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude of maidens,
Beauties unborn: and all, to one cadence,
They circle the rose on my rose-tree."

Very worthily are the love-poems crowned by the final dedication to E. B. B. I quote the last four lines :

" Oh their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it;
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom !"

Pardon me, reader, that I have said little about many of the best poems; that I have

said nothing at all about several; nothing about the ecstasy of prayer and love in "Saul;" nothing about the sacrifice of life, and its enjoyments, to knowledge in the "Grammarians' Funeral;" nothing about the passionate "Lover's Quarrel," about "Mesmerism," "Any wife to any husband," and many others. My consolation is, that we shall have a good deal more to say of Robert Browning in this Magazine, and then we can make amends.

Yet a few words, and I have done. For, as I wrote this, many times angry indignant words came to my lips, which stopped my writing till I could be quieter. For I suppose, reader, that you see whereabouts among the poets I place Robert Browning; high among the poets of all time, and I scarce know whether first, or second, in our own: and, it is a bitter thing to me to see the way in which he has been received by almost everybody; many having formed a certain theory of their own about him, from reading, I suppose, some of the least finished poems among the "Dramatic Lyrics," make all facts bend to this theory, after the fashion of theory-mongers: they think him, or say

they think him, a careless man, writing down anyhow anything that comes into his head. Oh truly! "The statue and the bust" shows this! or the soft solemn flow of that poem, "By the Fireside!" "Paracelsus!"—that, with its wonderful rhythm, its tender sadness, its noble thoughts, must have been very easy to write, surely!

Then they say, too, that Browning is so obscure as not to be understood by any one. Now, I know well enough what they mean by "obscure," and I know also that they use the word wrongly; meaning difficult to understand fully at first reading, or, say at second reading, even: yet, taken so, in what a cloud of obscurity would "Hamlet" be! Do they think this to be the case? they daren't *say* so at all events, though I suspect some of them of thinking so.

Now, I don't say that Robert Browning is not sometimes really obscure. He would be a perfect poet (of some calibre or other) if he were not; but I assert, fearlessly, that this obscurity is seldom so prominent as to make his poems hard to understand on this ground: while, as to that which they call obscurity, it results from depth of thought,

and greatness of subject, on the poet's part, and on his readers' part, from their shallower brains and more bounded knowledge; nay, often I fear from mere wanton ignorance and idleness.

So I believe that, though this obscurity, so called, would indeed be very objectionable, if, as some seem to think, poetry is merely a department of "light literature;" yet, if it is rather one of the very grandest of all God's gifts to men, we must not think it hard if we have sometimes to exercise thought over a great poem, nay, even sometimes the utmost straining of all our thoughts, an agony almost equal to that of the poet who created the poem.

However, this accusation against Browning of carelessness, and consequent roughness in rhythm, and obscurity in language and thought, has come to be pretty generally believed; and people, as a rule, do not read him; this evil spreading so, that many, almost unconsciously, are kept from reading him, who, if they did read, would sympathize with him thoroughly.

But it was always so; it was so with Tennyson when he first published his poems;

it was so last year with Maud; it is so with Ruskin; they petted him indeed at first; his wonderful eloquence having some effect even upon the critics; but, as his circle grew larger, and larger, embracing more and more truth, they more and more fell off from him; his firm faith in right they call arrogance and conceit now; his eager fighting with falsehood and wrong they call unfairness. I wonder what they will say to his new volume.

The story of the Præ-Raphaelites—we all know that, only here, thank Heaven! the public has chosen to judge for itself somewhat, though to this day their noblest pictures are the least popular.

Yes, I wonder what the critics would have said to "Hamlet Prince of Denmark," if it had been first published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall in the year 1855.



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of their intrinsic excellence as representative of the best literature; second because of the exceptionally refined taste and thoughtful pains with which they are designed and made; third, because of the really moderate prices at which they are offered to the public; and fourth, because they come from a city which is not ordinarily considered a center of the publishing trade. Portland, Maine, may well be proud of its production of these books, and Mr. Mosher has laid a good many people under considerable obligations to him, and for more reasons than one.—
The Literary World,
November 27, 1897.

THE SONNETS OF MICHAEL ANGELO BUONARROTI

TRANSLATED BY
JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

NOT one of the least obligations the world of English letters is under to the late John Addington Symonds is for his complete translation of the sonnets of Michael Angelo issued in 1878.

After more than two centuries of a mistaken theory in editing, an authoritative Italian text was in 1863 first given to the world by Signor Cesare Guasti; and from that year dates the restoration of Michael Angelo to his place as one of the world's great poets. It was immediately seen that all translations based upon the text of Machael Angelo the younger, (1623), whatever their poetic value, were of incurable inaccuracy.

"Rossetti often remarked that he had intended to translate the sonnets of Michael Angelo, until he saw Mr Symonds' translation, when he was so much impressed by its excellence that he forthwith abandoned the purpose."

T. HALL CAINE.

(Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. London, 1882.)

THE EDITION IS AS FOLLOWS :

925 copies, Van Gelder paper, at \$1.00, net.
100 copies, Japan Vellum, at \$2.50, net.

THOMAS B. MOSHER,
XLV Exchange St., - PORTLAND, MAINE.

The Bi Belof

'So near to Death, so far away from God.'

NOT only does this line sum up Michael Angelo's inmost thought about himself, it also passes judgment upon his magnificent era hastening to its close,—that Renaissance which has run its course and is doomed to speedy extinction on Italian soil. In previous studies of that New Age we have felt this breath of the Unseen, in Songs of dead Florentines, in *La Bella Simonetta* 'borne to her grave with uncovered face,' in the work of Botticelli, and 'the skyiest of them all,' Luca della Robbia.

Even more poignantly in this essay upon the master's poetry are we made acquainted with his 'sentiment of profound pity'—'the pity of the Virgin Mother over the dead body of Christ, expanded into the pity of all mothers over all dead sons.' In a passage of supreme felicity Pater interprets the beatitude of the new body as discerned by Michael Angelo; interprets it with the unforced pathos of its inevitable evanescence; 'the new body—a

dream that lingers a moment, retreating in the dawn, incomplete, aimless, helpless; a thing with faint bearing, faint memory, faint power of touch; a breath, a flame in the doorway, a feather in the wind.'

If this was Michael Angelo's conception of the life to come, it is unlike Dante's belief 'who thinks indeed the dead will hear if you cry loud enough.' Nay, after three centuries, it is singularly modern,—our very own! For these words are clothed with a verity we cannot disallow, rather, must accept as a philosophic finality.



FOR MAY:

TARES:

A BOOK OF VERSES

By

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

THE POETRY OF
MICHELANGELO

By

WALTER PATER

*Now that these wings to speed my wish ascend,
The more I feel vast air beneath my feet,
The more toward boundless air on pinions fleet,
Spurning the earth, soaring to heaven, I tend :
Nor makes them stoop their flight the direful end
Of Dædal's son ; but upward still they beat :—
What life the while with my life can compete,
Though dead to earth at last I shall descend ?
My own heart's voice in the void air I hear :
Where wilt thou bear me, O rash man ? Recall
Thy daring will ! This boldness waits on fear !
Dread not, I answer, that tremendous fall :
Strike through the clouds, and smile when death is near,
If death so glorious be our doom at all !*

GIORDANO BRUNO (?)

(J. A. Symonds.)

“NOTHING is more clear than that Michael Angelo worshipped Beauty in the Platonic spirit, passing beyond its personal and specific manifestations to the universal and impersonal. This thought is repeated over and over again in his poetry; and if we bear in mind that he habitually regarded the loveliness of man or woman as a sign and symbol of eternal and immutable beauty, we shall feel it of less importance to discover who it was that prompted him to this or that poetic utterance. That the loves of his youth were not so tranquil as those of his old age, appears not only from the regret expressed in his religious verses, but also from one or two of the rare sonnets referable to his manhood.”

“Each supreme artist whom God hath sent into the world with inspiration and a particle of the imperishable fire, is a law to himself, an universe, a revelation of the divine life under one of its innumerable attributes. We cannot therefore classify Michelangelo with any of his peers throughout the long procession of the ages. Of each and all of them it must be said in Ariosto’s words, ‘Nature made him, and then broke the mould.’ Yet if we seek Michelangelo’s affinities, we find them in Lucretius and Beethoven, not in Sophocles and Mozart.”

J. A. SYMONDS.

NOTE. Both forms of the name are used by Symonds; *Michael Angelo* in his translation of the *Sonnets*, and his *History of the Italian Renaissance*; and later, *Michelangelo*, in the *Life*.

The sonnet given on the preceding page “is generally attributed to Giordana Bruno, in whose Dialogue on the *Eroici Furori* it occurs.” (Symonds’ Introduction to *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Tommaso Campanella*, London, 1878.)

THE POETRY OF MICHELANGELO.

C RITICS of Michelangelo have sometimes spoken as if the only characteristic of his genius were a wonderful strength, verging, as in the things of the imagination great strength always does, on what is singular or strange. A certain strangeness, something of the blossoming of the aloe, is indeed an element in all true works of art; that they shall excite or surprise us is indispensable. But that they shall give pleasure and exert a charm over us is indispensable too; and this strangeness must be sweet also—a lovely strangeness. And to the true admirers of Michelangelo this is the true type of the Michelangelesque—sweetness and strength, pleasure with surprise, an energy of conception which seems at every moment about to break through all the conditions of comely form, recovering, touch by touch, a loveliness found usually only in the simplest natural things—*ex forti dulcedo*.

In this way he sums up for them the whole character of medieval art itself in that which distinguishes it most clearly from classical work, the presence of a convulsive energy in it, becoming in lower hands merely

monstrous or forbidding, but felt, even in its most graceful products, as a subdued quaintness or grotesque. Yet those who feel this grace or sweetness in Michelangelo might at the first moment be puzzled if they were asked wherein precisely the quality resided. Men of inventive temperament—Victor Hugo, for instance, in whom, as in Michelangelo, people have for the most part been attracted or repelled by the strength, while few have understood his sweetness—have sometimes relieved conceptions of merely moral or spiritual greatness, but with little æsthetic charm of their own, by lovely accidents or accessories, like the butterfly which alights on the blood-stained barricade in *Les Misérables*, or those sea-birds for which the monstrous Gilliatt comes to be as some wild natural thing so that they are no longer afraid of him, in *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*. But the austere genius of Michelangelo, will not depend for its sweetness on any mere accessories like these. The world of natural things has almost no existence for him; “When one speaks of him,” says Grimm, “woods, clouds, seas, and mountains disappear, and only what is formed by the

spirit of man remains behind;" and he quotes a few slight words from a letter of his to Vasari as the single expression in all he has left of a feeling for nature. He has traced no flowers, like those with which Leonardo stars over his gloomiest rocks; nothing like the fretwork of wings and flames in which Blake frames his most startling conceptions; no forest-scenery like Titian's fills his backgrounds, but only blank ranges of rock, and dim vegetable forms as blank as they, as in a world before the creation of the first five days.

Of the whole story of the creation he has painted only the creation of the first man and woman, and, for him at least, feebly, the creation of light. It belongs to the quality of his genius thus to concern itself almost exclusively with the creation of man. For him it is not, as in the story itself, the last and crowning act of a series of developments, but the first and unique act, the creation of life itself in its supreme form, off-hand and immediately, in the cold and lifeless stone. With him the beginning of life has all the characteristics of resurrection; it is like the recovery of suspended health or animation,

with its gratitude, its effusion, and eloquence. Fair as the young men of the Elgin marbles, the Adam of the Sistine Chapel is unlike them in a total absence of that balance and completeness which express so well the sentiment of a self-contained, independent life. In that languid figure there is something rude and satyr-like, something akin to the rugged hillside on which it lies. His whole form is gathered into an expression of mere expectation and reception; he has hardly strength enough to lift his finger to touch the finger of the creator; yet a touch of the finger-tips will suffice.

This creation of life—life coming always as relief or recovery, and always in strong contrast with the rough-hewn mass in which it is kindled—is in various ways the motive of all his work, whether its immediate subject be Pagan or Christian, legend or allegory; and this, although at least one-half of his work was designed for the adornment of tombs—the tomb of Julius, the tombs of the Medici. Not the Judgment but the Resurrection is the real subject of his last work in the Sistine Chapel; and his favourite Pagan subject is the legend of Leda, the

delight of the world breaking from the egg of a bird. As I have already pointed out, he secures that ideality of expression which in Greek sculpture depends on a delicate system of abstraction, and in early Italian sculpture on lowness of relief, by an incompleteness, which is surely not always undesigned, and which I suppose no one regrets, and trusts to the spectator to complete the half-emergent form. And as his persons have something of the unwrought stone about them, so, as if to realise the expression by which the old Florentine records describe a sculptor—*master of live stone*—with him the very rocks seem to have life; they have but to cast away the dust and scurf that they may rise and stand on their feet. He loved the very quarries of Carrara, those strange grey peaks which even at mid-day convey into any scene from which they are visible something of the solemnity and stillness of evening, sometimes wandering among them month after month, till at last their pale ashen colours seem to have passed into his painting; and on the crown of the head of the *David* there still remains a morsel of

uncut stone, as if by one touch to maintain its connexion with the place from which it was hewn.

And it is in this penetrative suggestion of life that the secret of that sweetness of his is to be found. He gives us indeed no lovely natural objects like Leonardo or Titian, but only the coldest, most elementary shadowing of rock or tree; no lovely draperies and comely gestures of life, but only the austere truths of human nature; "simple persons"—as he replied in his rough way to the querulous criticism of Julius the Second, that there was no gold on the figures of the Sistine Chapel—"simple persons, who wore no gold on their garments;" but he penetrates us with a sense of that power which we associate with all the warmth and fulness of the world, and the sense of which brings into one's thoughts a swarm of birds and flowers and insects. The brooding spirit of life itself is there; and the summer may burst out in a moment.

He was born in an interval of a rapid midnight journey in March, at a place in the neighbourhood of Arezzo, the thin, clear air of which, as was then thought, being favour-

able to the birth of children of great parts. He came of a race of grave and dignified men, who, claiming kinship with the family of Canossa, and some colour of imperial blood in their veins, had, generation after generation, received honourable employment under the government of Florence. His mother, a girl of nineteen years, put him out to nurse at a country house among the hills of Settignano, where every other inhabitant is a worker in the marble quarries, and the child early became familiar with that strange first stage in the sculptor's art. To this succeeded the influence of the sweetest and most placid master Florence had yet seen, Domenico Ghirlandajo. At fifteen he was at work among the curiosities of the garden of the Medici, copying and restoring antiques, winning the condescending notice of the great Lorenzo. He knew too how to excite strong hatreds; and it was at this time that in a quarrel with a fellow-student he received a blow on the face which deprived him for ever of the comeliness of outward form. It was through an accident that he came to study those works of the early Italian sculptors which suggested much of his own

grandest work, and impressed it with so deep a sweetness. He believed in dreams and omens. One of his friends dreamed twice that Lorenzo, then lately dead, appeared to him in grey and dusty apparel. To Michelangelo this dream seemed to portend the troubles which afterwards really came, and with the suddenness which was characteristic of all his movements, he left Florence. Having occasion to pass through Bologna, he neglected to procure the little seal of red wax which the stranger entering Bologna must carry on the thumb of his right hand. He had no money to pay the fine, and would have been thrown into prison had not one of the magistrates interposed. He remained in this man's house a whole year, rewarding his hospitality by readings from the Italian poets whom he loved. Bologna, with its endless colonnades and fantastic leaning towers, can never have been one of the lovelier cities of Italy. But about the portals of its vast unfinished churches and its dark shrines half hidden by votive flowers and candles, lie some of the sweetest works of the early Tuscan sculptors, Giovanni da Pisa and Jacopo della Quercia,

things as winsome as flowers; and the year which Michelangelo spent in copying these works was not a lost year. It was now, on returning to Florence, that he put forth that unique presentment of Bacchus, which expresses, not the mirthfulness of the god of wine, but his sleepy seriousness, his enthusiasm, his capacity for profound dreaming. No one ever expressed more truly than Michelangelo the notion of inspired sleep, of faces charged with dreams. A vast fragment of marble had long lain below the *Loggia* of Orcagna, and many a sculptor had had his thoughts of a design which should just fill this famous block of stone, cutting the diamond, as it were, without loss. Under Michelangelo's hand it became the *David* which stood till lately on the steps of the *Palazzo Vecchio*, when it was replaced below the *Loggia*. Michelangelo was now thirty years old, and his reputation was established. Three great works fill the remainder of his life—three works often interrupted, carried on through a thousand hesitations, a thousand disappointments, quarrels with his patrons, quarrels with his family, quarrels perhaps most of all with himself—the Sistine Chapel,

the Mausoleum of Julius the Second, and the sacristy of *San Lorenzo*.

In the story of Michelangelo's life the strength, often turning to bitterness, is not far to seek; a discordant note sounds throughout it which almost spoils the music. He "treats the Pope as the King of France himself would not dare to treat him"; he goes along the streets of Rome "like an executioner," Raffaello says of him. Once he seems to have shut himself up with the intention of starving himself to death. As we come in reading his life on its harsh, untempered incidents, the thought again and again arises that he is one of those who incur the judgment of Dante, as having "wilfully lived in sadness." Even his tenderness and pity are embittered by their strength. What passionate weeping in that mysterious figure which, in the *Creation of Adam*, crouches below the image of the Almighty, as he comes with the forms of things to be, woman and her progeny, in the fold of his garment! What a sense of wrong in those two captive youths, who feel the chains like scalding water on their proud and delicate flesh! The idealist who became a reformer

with Savonarola, and a republican superintending the fortification of Florence—the nest where he was born, *il nido ove naqu'io*, as he calls it once, in a sudden throb of affection—in its last struggle for liberty, yet believed always that he had imperial blood in his veins and was of the kindred of the great Matilda, had within the depths of his nature some secret spring of indignation or sorrow. We know little of his youth, but all tends to make one believe in the vehemence of its passions. Beneath the Platonic calm of the sonnets there is latent a deep delight in carnal form and colour. There, and still more in the madrigals, he often falls into the language of less tranquil affections; while some of them have the colour of penitence, as from a wanderer returning home. He who spoke so decisively of the supremacy in the imaginative world of the unveiled human form had not been always, we may think, a mere Platonic lover. Vague and wayward his loves may have been; but they partook of the strength of his nature, and sometimes, it may be, would by no means become music, so that the comely order of his days was

quite put out: *par che amaro ogni mio dolce
io senta.*

But his genius is in harmony with itself; and just as in the products of his art we find resources of sweetness within their exceeding strength, so in his own story also, bitter as the ordinary sense of it may be, there are select pages shut in among the rest—pages one might easily turn over too lightly, but which yet sweeten the whole volume. The interest of Michelangelo's poems is that they make us spectators of this struggle; the struggle of a strong nature to adorn and attune itself; the struggle of a desolating passion, which yearns to be resigned and sweet and pensive, as Dante's was. It is a consequence of the occasional and informal character of his poetry, that it brings us nearer to himself, his own mind and temper, than any work done only to support a literary reputation could possibly do. His letters tell us little that is worth knowing about him—a few poor quarrels about money and commissions. But it is quite otherwise with these songs and sonnets, written down at odd moments, sometimes on the margins of his sketches, themselves often unfinished

sketches, arresting some salient feeling or unpremeditated idea as it passed. And it happens that a true study of these has become within the last few years for the first time possible. A few of the sonnets circulated widely in manuscript, and became almost within Michelangelo's own lifetime a subject of academical discourses. But they were first collected in a volume in 1623 by the great-nephew of Michelangelo, Michelangelo Buonarroto the younger. He omitted much, re-wrote the sonnets in part, and sometimes compressed two or more compositions into one, always losing something of the force and incisiveness of the original. So the book remained, neglected even by Italians themselves in the last century, through the influence of that French taste which despised all compositions of the kind, as it despised and neglected Dante. "His reputation will ever be on the increase, because he is so little read," says Voltaire of Dante.—But in 1858 the last of the Buonarroto bequeathed to the municipality of Florence the curiosities of his family. Among them was a precious volume containing the autograph of the sonnets. A learned Italian,

Signor Cesare Guasti, undertook to collate this autograph with other manuscripts at the Vatican and elsewhere, and in 1863 published a true version of Michelangelo's poems, with dissertations and a paraphrase.*

People have often spoken of these poems as if they were a mere cry of distress, a lover's complaint over the obduracy of Vittoria Colonna. But those who speak thus forget that though it is quite possible that Michelangelo had seen Vittoria, that somewhat shadowy figure, as early as 1537, yet their closer intimacy did not begin till about the year 1542, when Michelangelo was nearly seventy years old. Vittoria herself, an ardent neo-catholic, vowed to perpetual widowhood since the news had reached her, seventeen years before, that her husband, the youthful and princely Marquess of Pescara, lay dead of the wounds he had received in the battle of Pavia, was then no longer an object of great passion. In a dialogue written by the painter, Francesco d'Ollanda, we catch a glimpse of them together in an empty church at Rome, one

* The sonnets have been translated into English, with much poetic taste and skill, by Mr. J. A. Symonds.

Sunday afternoon, discussing indeed the characteristics of various schools of art, but still more the writings of Saint Paul, already following the ways and tasting the sunless pleasures of weary people, whose hold on outward things is slackening. In a letter still extant he regrets that when he visited her after death he had kissed her hands only. He made, or set to work to make, a crucifix for her use, and two drawings, perhaps in preparation for it, are now in Oxford. From allusions in the sonnets, we may divine that when they first approached each other he had debated much with himself whether this last passion would be the most unsoftening, the most desolating of all—*un dolce amaro, un sì e no mi muovi*; is it carnal affection, or, *del suo prestino stato* (Plato's anti-natal state) *il raggio ardente*? The older, conventional criticism, dealing with the text of 1623, had lightly assumed that all or nearly all the sonnets were actually addressed to Vittoria herself; but Signor Guasti finds only four, or at most five, which can be so attributed on genuine authority. Still, there are reasons which make him assign the majority of them to

the period between 1542 and 1547, and we may regard the volume as a record of this resting-place in Michelangelo's story. We know how Goethe escaped from the stress of sentiments too strong for him by making a book about them; and for Michelangelo, to write down his passionate thoughts at all, to make sonnets about them, was already in some measure to command, and have his way with them—

*La vita del mia amor non è il cor mio,
Ch' amor, di quel ch'io t' amo, è senza core.*

It was just because Vittoria raised no great passion that the space in his life where she reigns has such peculiar suavity; and the spirit of the sonnets is lost if we once take them out of that dreamy atmosphere in which men have things as they will, because the hold of all outward things upon them is faint and thin. Their prevailing tone is a calm and meditative sweetness. The cry of distress is indeed there, but as a mere residue, a trace of bracing chalybeate salt, just discernible in the song which rises as a clear, sweet spring from a charmed space in his life.

This charmed and temperate space in Michelangelo's life, without which its excessive strength would have been so imperfect, which saves him from the judgment of Dante on those who "wilfully lived in sadness," is then a well-defined period there, reaching from the year 1542 to the year 1547, the year of Vittoria's death. In it the lifelong effort to tranquillise his vehement emotions by withdrawing them into the region of ideal sentiment, becomes successful; and the significance of Vittoria there is, that she realises for him a type of affection which even in disappointment may charm and sweeten his spirit. In this effort to tranquillise and sweeten life by idealising its vehement sentiments, there were two great traditional types, either of which an Italian of the sixteenth century might have followed. There was Dante, whose little book of the *Vita Nuova* had early become a pattern of imaginative love, maintained somewhat feebly by the later followers of Petrarch; and, since Plato had become something more than a name in Italy by the publication of the Latin translation of his works by Marsilio Ficino, there was the Platonic tradition also.

Dante's belief in the resurrection of the body, through which, even in heaven, Beatrice loses for him no tinge of flesh-colour, or fold of raiment even—and the Platonic dream of the passage of the soul through one form of life after another, with its passionate haste to escape from the burden of bodily form altogether—are, for all effects of art or poetry, principles diametrically opposite; and it is the Platonic tradition rather than Dante's that has moulded Michelangelo's verse. In many ways no sentiment could have been less like Dante's love for Beatrice than Michelangelo's for Vittoria Colonna. Dante's comes in early youth: Beatrice is a child, with the wistful, ambiguous vision of a child, with a character still unaccentuated by the influence of outward circumstances, almost expressionless. Vittoria is a woman already weary, in advanced age, of grave intellectual qualities. Dante's story is a piece of figured work, inlaid with lovely incidents. In Michelangelo's poems, frost and fire are almost the only images—the refining fire of the goldsmith; once or twice the phoenix; ice melting at the fire; fire struck from the rock which it afterwards

consumes. Except one doubtful allusion to a journey, there are almost no incidents. But there is much of the bright, sharp, unerring skill, with which in boyhood he gave the look of age to the head of a faun by chipping a tooth from its jaw with a single stroke of the hammer. For Dante, the amiable and devout materialism of the middle age sanctifies all that is presented by hand and eye. Michelangelo is always pressing forward from the outward beauty—*il bel del fuor che agli occhi piace*—to apprehend the unseen beauty; *trascenda nella forma universale*—that abstract form of beauty, about which the Platonists reason. And this gives the impression in him of something flitting and unfixed, of the houseless and complaining spirit, almost clairvoyant through the frail and yielding flesh. He accounts for love at first sight by a previous state of existence—*la dove io t'amai prima*.

And yet there are many points in which he is really like Dante, and comes very near to the original image, beyond those later and feebler followers of Petrarch. He learns from Dante rather than from Plato, that

for lovers, the surfeiting of desire—*ove gran desir gran copia affrena*, is a state less happy than misery full of hope—*una miseria di speranza piena*. He recalls him in the repetition of the words *gentile* and *cortesia*, in the personification of *Amor*, in the tendency to dwell minutely on the physical effects of the presence of a beloved object on the pulses and the heart. Above all, he resembles Dante in the warmth and intensity of his political utterances, for the lady of one of his noblest sonnets was from the first understood to be the city of Florence; and he avers that all must be asleep in heaven, if she, who was created “of angelic form,” for a thousand lovers is appropriated by one alone, some Piero, or Alessandro de’ Medici. Once and again he introduces Love and Death, who dispute concerning him; for, like Dante and all the nobler souls of Italy, he is much occupied with thoughts of the grave, and his true mistress is death; death at first as the worst of all sorrows and disgraces, with a clod of the field for its brain; afterwards, death in its high distinction, its detachment from vulgar needs, the angry stains of life and action escaping fast.

Some of those whom the gods love die young. This man, because the gods loved him, lingered on to be of immense, patriarchal age, till the sweetness it had taken so long to secrete in him was found at last. Out of the strong came forth sweetness, *ex forti dulcedo*. The world had changed around him. The *New-catholicism* had taken the place of the Renaissance. The spirit of the Roman Church had changed: in the vast world's cathedral which his skill had helped to raise for it, it looked stronger than ever. Some of the first members of the *Oratory* were among his intimate associates. They were of a spirit as unlike as possible from that of Lorenzo, or Savonarola even. The opposition of the Reformation to art has been often enlarged upon; far greater was that of the Catholic revival. But in thus fixing itself in a frozen orthodoxy, the Roman Catholic Church had passed beyond him, and he was a stranger to it. In earlier days, when its beliefs had been in a fluid state, he too might have been drawn into the controversy; he might have been for spiritualising the papal sovereignty, like Savonarola; or for adjusting the dreams of

Plato and Homer with the words of Christ, like Pico of Mirandola. But things had moved onward, and such adjustments were no longer possible. For himself, he had long since fallen back on that divine ideal, which above the wear and tear of creeds has been forming itself for ages as the possession of nobler souls. And now he began to feel the soothing influence which since that time the Roman Church has often exerted over spirits too independent to be its subjects, yet brought within the neighbourhood of its action; consoled and tranquillised, as a traveller might be, resting for one evening in a strange city, by its stately aspect, and the sentiment of its many fortunes, just because with those fortunes he has nothing to do. So he lingers on; a *revenant*, as the French say, a ghost out of another age, in a world too coarse to touch his faint sensibilities too closely; dreaming, in a worn-out society, theatrical in its life, theatrical in its art, theatrical even in its devotion, on the morning of the world's history, on the primitive form of man, on the images under which that primitive world had conceived of spiritual forces.

I have dwelt on the thought of Michelangelo as thus lingering beyond his time in a world not his own, because, if one is to distinguish the peculiar savour of his work, he must be approached, not through his followers, but through his predecessors; not through the marbles of *Saint Peter's*, but through the work of the sculptors of the fifteenth century over the tombs and altars of Tuscany. He is the last of the Florentines, of those on whom the peculiar sentiment of the Florence of Dante and Giotto descended: he is the consummate representative of the form that sentiment took in the fifteenth century with men like Luca Signorelli and Mino da Fiesole. Up to him the tradition of sentiment is unbroken, the progress towards surer and more mature methods of expressing that sentiment continuous. But his professed disciples did not share this temper; they are in love with his strength only, and seem not to feel his grave and temperate sweetness. Theatricality is their chief characteristic; and that is a quality as little attributable to Michelangelo as to Mino or Luca Signorelli. With him, as with them, all is serious, passionate, impulsive.

This discipleship of Michelangelo, this dependence of his on the tradition of the Florentine schools, is nowhere seen more clearly than in his treatment of the *Creation*. The *Creation of Man* had haunted the mind of the middle age like a dream; and weaving it into a hundred carved ornaments of capital or doorway, the Italian sculptors had early impressed upon it that pregnancy of expression which seems to give it many veiled meanings. As with other artistic conceptions of the middle age, its treatment became almost conventional, handed on from artist to artist, with slight changes, till it came to have almost an independent, abstract existence of its own. It was characteristic of the medieval mind thus to give an independent traditional existence to a special pictorial conception, or to a legend, like that of *Tristram* or *Tannhäuser*, or even to the very thoughts and substance of a book, like the *Imitation*, so that no single workman could claim it as his own, and the book, the image, the legend, had itself a legend, and its fortunes, and a personal history; and it is a sign of the medievalism of Michelangelo, that he thus receives from tradition his

central conception, and does but add the last touches, in transferring it to the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel.

But there was another tradition of those earlier more serious Florentines, of which Michelangelo is the inheritor, to which he gives the final expression, and which centres in the sacristy of *San Lorenzo*, as the tradition of the *Creation* centres in the Sistine Chapel. It has been said that all the great Florentines were preoccupied with death. *Oltre-tombe! Oltre-tombe!*—is the burden of their thoughts, from Dante to Savonarola. Even the gay and licentious Boccaccio gives a keener edge to his stories by putting them in the mouths of a party of people who had taken refuge from the danger of death by plague, in a country-house. It was to this inherited sentiment, this practical decision that to be preoccupied with the thought of death was in itself dignifying, and a note of high quality, that the seriousness of the great Florentines of the fifteenth century was partly due; and it was reinforced in them by the actual sorrows of their times. How often, and in what various ways, had they seen life stricken

down, in their streets and houses! *La bella Simonetta* dies in early youth, and is borne to the grave with uncovered face. The young Cardinal Jacopo di Portogallo dies on a visit to Florence—*insignis formâ fui et mirabili modestiâ*—his epitaph dares to say. Antonio Rossellino carves his tomb in the church of San Miniato, with care for the shapely hands and feet, and sacred attire; Luca della Robbia puts his skyeyest works there; and the tomb of the youthful and princely prelate became the strangest and most beautiful thing in that strange and beautiful place. After the execution of the Pazzi conspirators, Botticelli is employed to paint their portraits. This preoccupation with serious thoughts and sad images might easily have resulted, as it did, for instance, in the gloomy villages of the Rhine, or in the overcrowded parts of medieval Paris, as it still does in many a village of the Alps, in something merely morbid or grotesque, in the *Danse Macabre* of many French and German painters, or the grim inventions of Dürer. From such a result the Florentine masters of the fifteenth century were saved by their high Italian dignity and culture, and

still more by their tender pity for the thing itself. They must often have leaned over the lifeless body, when all was at length quiet and smoothed out. After death, it is said, the traces of slighter and more superficial dispositions disappear; the lines become more simple and dignified; only the abstract lines remain, in a great indifference. They came thus to see death in its distinction; and following it perhaps one stage further, dwelling for a moment on the point where all that transitory dignity must break up, and discerning with no clearness a new body, they paused just in time, and abstained, with a sentiment of profound pity.

Of all this sentiment Michelangelo is the achievement; and first of all, of pity. *Pietà*—pity—the pity of the Virgin Mother over the dead body of Christ, expanded into the pity of all mothers over all dead sons, the entombment, with its cruel “hard stones”—that is the subject of his predilection. He has left it in many forms, sketches, half-finished designs, finished and unfinished groups of sculpture; but always as a hopeless, rayless, almost heathen sorrow—no divine sorrow, but mere pity and awe at the

stiff limbs and colourless lips. There is a drawing of his at Oxford, in which the dead body has sunk to the earth between the mother's feet, with the arms extended over her knees. The tombs in the sacristy of *San Lorenzo* are memorials, not of any of the nobler and greater Medici, but of Giuliano, and Lorenzo the younger, noticeable chiefly for their somewhat early death. It is mere human nature therefore which has prompted the sentiment here. The titles assigned traditionally to the four symbolical figures, *Night* and *Day*, *The Twilight* and *The Dawn*, are far too definite for them; for these figures come much nearer to the mind and spirit of their author, and are a more direct expression of his thoughts, than any merely symbolical conceptions could possibly have been. They concentrate and express, less by way of definite conceptions than by the touches, the promptings of a piece of music, all those vague fancies, misgivings, presentiments, which shift and mix and define themselves and fade again, whenever the thoughts try to fix themselves with sincerity on the conditions and surroundings of the disembodied spirit. I suppose no

one would come to the sacristy of San Lorenzo for consolation; for seriousness, for solemnity, for dignity of impression, perhaps, but not for consolation. It is a place neither of terrible nor consoling thoughts, but of vague and wistful speculation. Here, again, Michelangelo is the disciple not so much of Dante as of the Platonists. Dante's belief in immortality is formal, precise, and firm, as much so almost as that of a child, who thinks the dead will hear if you cry loud enough. But in Michelangelo you have maturity, the mind of the grown man, dealing cautiously and dispassionately with serious things; and what hope he has is based on the consciousness of ignorance—ignorance of man, ignorance of the nature of the mind, its origin and capacities. Michelangelo is so ignorant of the spiritual world, of the new body and its laws, that he does not surely know whether the consecrated Host may not be the body of Christ. And of all that range of sentiment he is the poet, a poet still alive, and in possession of our inmost thoughts—dumb inquiry over the relapse after death into the formlessness which preceded life, the change, the revolt

from that change, then the correcting, hallowing, consoling rush of pity; at last, far off, thin and vague, yet not more vague than the most definite thoughts men have had through three centuries on a matter that has been so near their hearts, the new body—a passing light, a mere intangible, external effect, over those too rigid, or too formless faces; a dream that lingers a moment, retreating in the dawn, incomplete, aimless, helpless; a thing with faint hearing, faint memory, faint power of touch; a breath, a flame in the doorway, a feather in the wind.

The qualities of the great masters in art or literature, the combination of those qualities, the laws by which they moderate, support, relieve each other, are not peculiar to them; but most often typical standards, or revealing instances, of the laws by which certain æsthetic effects are produced. The old masters indeed are simpler; their characteristics are written larger, and are easier to read, than their analogues in all the mixed, confused productions of the modern mind. But when once we have succeeded in defining for ourselves those characteristics, and the law of their combination, we have

THE POETRY OF MICHELANGELO

acquired a standard or measure which helps us to put in its right place many a vagrant genius, many an unclassified talent, many precious though imperfect products of art. It is so with the components of the true character of Michelangelo. That strange interfusion of sweetness and strength is not to be found in those who claimed to be his followers; but it is found in many of those who worked before him, and in many others down to our own time, in William Blake, for instance, and Victor Hugo, who, though not of his school, and unaware, are his true sons, and help us to understand him, as he in turn interprets and justifies them. Perhaps this is the chief use in studying old masters.

1871.



WHETHER IN LONELY NIGHTS
WITH POESY'S DELIGHTS
HE CHEERED HIS SOLITUDE,
IN SCULPTURED SONNETS WROUGHT
HIS FIRM AND GRACEFUL THOUGHT,
LIKE MARBLE ALTARS IN SOME DARK AND MYSTIC WOOD,—

SO STOOD THIS ANGELO
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO;
SO GRANDLY STILL HE STANDS
MID LESSER WORLDS OF ART,
COLOSSAL AND APART,
LIKE MEMNON BREATHING SONGS ACROSS THE DESERT SANDS

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The Bibelof

THE first and only edition of Tares is a very scarce little tome¹; a mere pamphlet modestly masquerading, as it were, in light cloth domino! Issued, indeed, some fourteen years before our new Golden Age of Shilling Garlands and such-like rhymed wares of Autolycus.

"If," said the anonymous reviewer² at the time of its appearance, "this is the book of a young writer . . . it is work of the greatest promise, . . . full of the genuine ore of poetry—lofty, serious and impassioned." Then, with some deeper critical insight: "either it is the writing of a woman of rare delicacy of womanly feeling, or it has been given to the author to approach the feminine attitude of mind as few men have approached it."

Well, it was by 'a young writer,'—a girl scarce turned woman³; and with unasked permission, yet upon the direct author-

¹ The title-page is brevity itself: TARES | London | ['Publishers' imprint] | 1884. Crown, 8vo., Pp. vi-27. It has been observed by Mr. C. F. Blackburn (*Rambles in Books*, 1893), that this title of five letters also forms the word "tears."

² In the *Academy*, March 21, 1885.

³ Born in London, 1863.

ity of a friend of the poet, we may rest assured that *Tares* is the unacknowledged first book of Rosamund Marriott Watson.⁴

Of printing poetical pamphlets there is no end, — they are the ever recurrent preludings of the lesser gods of Song. And in most instances they are such pathetic little failures! A child's toy overtaken by the tide! A voice whereof the rest is silence! Only at rare intervals a seed of true poetic life is sown in Time's dark furrow; a tiny seed lying dormant till at a touch of belated Spring, — a wandering breath of Summer, — and lo! the estray has taken root — at last yields up its exquisite, unique flower.

⁴ A name fairly familiar to American readers. As 'Graham R. Tomson' she has published (1) *The Bird-Bride*, A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets, 1889. The sonnets in this book, notably the one entitled 'Omar Khayyám,' are comparable only with the superb series on Homeric themes by Andrew Lang. (2) *A Summer Night and Other Poems*, 1891, and (3) *Vespertilia and Other Verses*, 1895, this last, however, under her later signature.

⁵ Two other booklets assuredly worthy of 'keeps' are *Primavera: Poems, by four Authors*. (Oxford: 1890), one of whom is Mr. Stephen Phillips; and *A Branch of May*, (Baltimore, 1887), poems by Lizette Woodworth Reese.

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"Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?"

*"Whence came his feet into my field, and why ?
How is it that he finds it all so drear ?
How do I see his seeing, and how hear
The name his bitter silence knows it by ?"*

HERBSTLIED.

FAREWELL, my love, I love so well!
My sweetheart, lost as soon as won!
Sweet summer idyll, scarce begun—
Farewell!

Good-bye brown fields, and wind-swept skies,
With mellow sunset all aglow:
Unto the bitter north I go—
Good-bye!

Ah me, dear heart, Auf Wiederseh'n!
Surely one day we'll meet again;
And lest our hope relinquished be,
This watchword give Mnemosyne—
"Auf Wiederseh'n!"

EHEU FUGACES!

LIGHT and soft they flutter down,
Faded gauds from Autumn's crown :
Still they fall
With a slow, pathetic grace,
Touching now my hands, my face ;
Now—the wall.

“Ohne Hast und ohne Rast,”
Chill and grey the years have passed,
Ay de mi!
By this old red orchard wall
One fair face I still recall—
Almost see!

Ah, that still September day!
Bravely seemed the world and gay
To us then.
Then, we stood together here;
Now, the leaves fall, brown and sere,
Once again.

Worn and weary, old and grey,
Altered seems the world to-day—
Mine the blame;
For I see with time-dimmed eyes,
Though the kind autumnal skies
Smile the same.

Pure as winsome, fair as true;
Hard the fate that lost me you—
 Oh, my dear!
Still I see you leaning there,
With the dead leaves on your hair,
 Far, yet near.

My Neæra—vainly sought!
What to you has Fortune brought
 Since we met?
Love or hatred, doul or glee?
But her only gift to me
 Is—regret!

A TRIPTYCH.

LINGERING, sad and slow,
When the winter sun is low
And the great clouds westward roll,
Calls the sea's voice to my soul;
With a strange insistence cries,
Till old faces round me rise,
And I taste the salt free wind,
And the spell of the Undefined.
When the langourous days are long
Comes to me a tender song,
Making soft moan in mine ear—
Then the whisper of leaves I hear;
And Philomel's yearning strain
Through the warm dusk wails again;
For the dim woods call to me
In sweet hushed melody.
But the third voice speaks gay and loud,
For it calls me back to the crowd
And the city's Circe-charm;
There breathes no brooding calm,
But the waters of Lethe flow,
Drowning the long ago.
And I lose in the roar of the street
Sounds of retreating feet.

EIDOTHE?

IN very deed and truth did our souls once meet?
If your eyes lied not, yes; but I may not know,
Never may hold the surety that it was so.
But the thought alone is sweet.

Bitterly sweet; for the knowledge would come too late.
Do I dream now, or was blind in the bygone time—
Blind, and passed by without knowing our season's prime?
Ah, woefully blind is Fate!

Child, was it more with us then than the oft-told tale
(Old as all summers past, even as this one, new)?
More than the butterfly life the evening slew,
Yet pure from the serpent's trail?

Perchance, who knows?—yet I think that our souls knew best,
Just for a moment, I think; in this wise spoke,
“I have sought you long, and now—” Here the spell broke.
Shall we ever hear the rest?

Ah, well-a-day! for our brief day is done,
Bright with light laughter, and sun, and tinkling mirth.
Chance and the world's cult stifled the spirit-birth,
Though one hour our souls were one.

NIRVANA.

SLEEP will He give His beloved?
Not dreams, but the precious guerdon of deepest rest?
Aye, surely! Look on the grave-closed eyes,
And cold hands folded on tranquil breast.
Will *not* the All-Great be just, and forgive?

For He knows (though we make no prayer nor cry)
How our lone souls ached when our pale star waned,
How we watch the promiseless sky.

Life hereafter? Ah no; we have lived enough.

Life eternal? Pray God it may *not* be so.
Have we not suffered and striven, loved and endured,
Run through the whole wide gamut of passion and woe?

* * * * *

Strangest illusion! sprung from a fevered habit of hope,
Wild enthusiast's dream of blatant perfection at best.
Give us darkness for anguished eyes, stillness for weary feet,
Silence, and sleep; but no heaven of glittering, loud unrest.
No more the lifelong labour of smoothing the stone-strewn
way;

No more the shuddering outlook athwart the sterile plain,
Where every step we take, every word we say,
Each warm, living hand that we cling to, is but a fence
against pain.

* * * * *

And nothing may perish, but lives again? Where? Out of
thought, out of sight?

And where is your cresset's flame that the rough wind slew
last night?

OLD PAULINE.

So your boys are going to Paris? That's how I lost my own.

Lonely? Ah yes, but I know it, the old are always alone. You remember my boys, Euphrasie? No? Was it before your day?

Each, when his turn came, kissed me, and cried; but they went away.

How I longed for them, always, vainly! and thought of them, early and late;

I would start and look round in the pasture if any one clicked the gate.

But a greater sorrow fell on me; my Marie, with eyes so blue, Grew restless, poor bird! in the home-nest—she must seek her fortune too.

And, once the desire is on them, 'tis a fever, they cannot stay;

And Marie, my poor little Marie! well, I missed her one bright spring day.

'Twas *then* that my heart broke, 'Phrasie, for my children gay and tall,

For fair, vile, glittering Paris had taken them all.

Yet the good God is merciful always; I live, and I have no pain,

Only the old dumb longing for the children home again.

Still I watch the road to the city, up the glistening sunset track,

But they never come back, Euphrasie—never come back!

ULTIMA THULE.

I MUST sail to-night on the changeful sea,
To far Goshen's Land;
Sweetheart, now wilt thou go with me?
Reach me thine hand.
Here, the wind sobs and the death-cold rain
Drenches my heart,
Weird voices mock me; they cry in vain
That we dwell apart;
They moan that you never loved me, dear,
That you died untrue;
But I will not listen, I will not hear.
Let us go—we two.
Come, let us mount (it is none too soon)
The galleon's side;
There is light at last, for a crystal moon
Gleams on the tide.
So, how silent we sail, and swift,
We have left behind
Lying voices, and wild rain-drift,
And the weary wind.
A mist-hued light begins to dawn,
Nor dusk nor day,
Soft reflection of glory born
Of a night in May.
All past perfection, each gracious thought,
Is garnered here;

Lo, we land at last in the dear dim port
Of Yesteryear.
How the air is tender with old regrets!
Look round and see.
Here, oh my love, grow the violets
You gave to me;
And that sunset's wraith, that stole gleaming through
The magnolia bloom;
And the scented geranium plant that grew
In a sweet, still room;
With the music, too, that dwelt therein.
Do you forget
The pure, faint voice, so fresh and thin
Of your old spinet?
But the odorous earth beneath our feet,
Is all firm and sure;
This is the past, we will dwell here, sweet,
For evermore!

ECHOES.

WHERE is the scent of the flowers we gathered

When your rose garden was all aglow,
And the air too heavy almost with sweetness?

Gone, as surely as last year's snow.

Masses of odorous cream and golden,

Deepest crimson and faintest pink;

And the scent of one blood-red rose you gave me,

I shall never forget, I think.

Where is the sound of the songs you sang then

(You on the terrace, and I within)?

How fair you looked, with the sky behind you,

Idly touching your mandolin!

Not classic, no, but your voice was tender,

Tears sounded through, though the songs were gay,

'Twas as if you had stretched out your hand and touched me,

It had such a passionate, pleading way.

Quaint, soft Lieder, recalling the pinewoods,

Snatches of tinkling serenade,

But one strange, keen note from an old Stornello,

All these years in my soul has stayed.

And some day, I think, be it yule or summer,

Rain or sunshine, by land or sea,

The faint, sad perfume of those dead roses,

Their soul that still lives, will steal back to me.

And one day I know, in some soft still weather,
When pale light stays in an opal sky,
I shall hear that note from our old Stornello,
Wandering back from the days gone by.

BEYOND.

DIVIDED! yes, best so, though narrow the gulf that parts
her way and mine;
Easily overstepped, but once crossed, it would widen behind
us,
Widen and yawn at the back-turned feet—mine Love, or
thine?
Come, let us count the cost (what matter? the chance is
over),
And I lie in the still blue weather, and watch the shimmering
sea,
The cicala shrills in mine ear, I can count the seeds on the
grasses,
That sway 'tween my eyes and the sky, and the south wind
sighs to me.
Verily better so, with half the world's width between us,
Idle indeed to dream of the past, or the might have been;
Yet I, lying here in the sun, steeped in the spell of the lotus,
Conceive the renounced fruition, shadow forth actors and
scene.
Chill ghosts of honour and love, with faces that may not be
veiled,
Wide, stricken eyes, whose shamed glances may not be
turned;
Corruption of all that was purest, death of that which was
highest,
Only the dull grey ashes where once the red fire burned.

Weary decadence! the present heart-hunger *is* better,
Untouched the fruit still swings on the bending bough
Mellow and fair of hue. If within it be dust and ashes,
Yet I will not dream that it is not, for I never shall taste it
now.

Never, ah no, of a surety. The tender light of illusion
Shines unsullied for aye, through the dusk of my life's dim
room,

Only a glimmer; nay, but say, only a beacon,
Pallid, but steady and pure, as the sacred lamp in a tomb.

BITTERSWEET.

BITTER is life, I said,
My soul lies cold and dead,
Secretly, foully slain,
Never to stir again
With Love's own self at strife.

Bitter is life!

Art indeed dead, my heart?
Stilled all thy woe and smart
(Victor, yet vanquished quite),
Buried from love and light?

Dear Voice from out the past,
Callest thou then at last?
Wake, my heart, wake!
Live, for the old love's sake.
Haply we still may meet,
Life is full sweet!

VOR LANGER ZEIT.

DEEP, tender eyes, remembrance-fraught, unseeing,
Looking on dim fields through the twilight haze;
(Ah, strangely sweet, thrilling through all her Being,
Come back the bygone days).

“Dear days, mine only, to be cancelled—never,
You cannot die, for my life lives in you;
The love that gave you life is mine forever,
Infinite, perfect, true.

“Dear Love, nor death nor distance may bereave us;
Our Fates are powerless to snatch one day—
Ev’n their insatiate vengeance this must leave us;
Our Past is ours, for aye.

“Ah, but sometimes, dear, in the sweet spring weather,
Comes a wild, helpless longing to be free;
Then I can only know we *were* together,
And that it may not be.”

Sad eyes, sweet eyes, the fields are dark and lonely,
The subtle glamour of the gloaming, sped;
Wake, and turn in unto the firelight, only
Bury once more your dead.

A GREY DAY.

WEEP, heavy sky;
Wail, weary winter wind;
Frown, bitter world, for, be thou curst or kind,
I care not now—not I.

Only last year
Shone bright blue weather; memory-haunted May
Through the wet woodlands made sweet holyday.
Mavis and merle sang clear.

But I beheld not. No;
Mine eyes saw none of these fair outward things,
Marked not the chestnut's sheath, nor woodbine's rings,
Nor slim swan sailing slow.

Blinded with tears went I,
And all in vain for me were roses fair,
Summer's warm breath that soft caressed my hair,
And the sun's alchemy.

Yea, autumn smiled
(Sweet, mournful autumn in her russet gown),
With fresh, cool airs, and sad leaves swooning down,
And tender skies and mild.

I knew not then,
And yet remember all these things were so,
Even as old music, heeded not, we know,
What time it sounds again.

But now *I know* ;
And that old music, idly set apart,
Comes flooding back and quickens in my heart,
Thrilling, and wild, and low.

Ah, sky so grey !
What matter, since my love, my love is true ?
I wept, when thou wert brave in gala hue ;
But I am glad to-day.

To N——

“BE TRUE TO ME, AS I TO THEE.”

(RING POSY.)

BE true, ah, twin soul of my soul, be true!
Be true to me, as I must be to thee,
So that I, tossing on the storm-swept sea,
Still one sure star may view.

Be true, dear heart, for mine is bruised and sore,
Weary of all, save only thy sweet love;
Only to thee my bitter longings move
Ever, and evermore.

Would I might lean my head against thy breast,
Even as a child sore-vexed with thorny ways,
With aching feet, turns sobbing to its rest,
And there, contented, stays.

That may not be, but be thou true to me;
So may I still my hopeless fancy please;
My empty arms outstretchèd aye to thee
In visions such as these.

Ah, sweetheart mine! our dead past liveth yet—
Blossoms afresh, more bravely than of old;
Yet must I plead (for great dread maketh bold),
Never do thou forget!

NACHTSTÜCK.

I WILL lie still here in the shadow, and turn my face to the
wall
Mine eyes shall behold no other, since they may not mirror you ;
Since I may not hear your voice, mine ears shall be sealèd too ;
And my lips are mute to all.

But you, oh my fair, sweet love! you must walk far afield in
the light,
Not quite forgetting my soul that aches in the darkness here,
Though Time's soft dead hand puts me from you, each day
less dear
Grow the tender mem'ries of night.

And that shall be well, I am only a wraith of the past ;
No more may my glad arms cradle your drooped gold head ;
To you—and because to you to all—am I henceforth dead.
(And you knew not that kiss was our last?)

And that is well too—to the last was our summer sweet
To the very end, no pale cloud obscured our exquisite days ;
Our sun, for the last time, set in a warm, wild blaze,
Making earth and heaven meet.

False? Ah no, hardly that. Dear heart, you are *not* to
blame.
(Who carps at the sun, or the soft spring rain, or the gracious
evening dew?)

And I cavil not at your fair young soul, that would fain, but
could not, be true,
And I love you aye the same.

That you do not ask it, I know; and I would not, alas! *but*
must,

Prometheus-wise chained and tortured for ever. But you,
dear, are free,

And the welcomest gift that this wide blank universe holds
for me

Is a little handful of dust.

RECONCILIATION.

L IKE opals set in lead
Lie soft little clouds in the dull grey sky,
We are all alone here, you and I—
And they say you are dead.

Like the ray-kissed breast of a dove
Leans the weary moon on yon dim cloud's rim,
And the tall tree-shadows swim weird and grim
Over your still face, love.

The wan moon quickens your hair
Till I almost believe that you breathe again!
(Cold Earth, are you sure of your infinite gain?
Is she not passing fair?)

* * * * *

Black as the storm-scourged lea,
Spreads the blind blank pall of the empty sky.
I wonder, just now, did I hear you sigh?
Ah, listen! this once, to me.

Perchance, later on you might speak,
(The moon sleeps sound, there is no one near)
And my hand clasps yours in the darkness, dear,
My head to your cheek.

Once, I doubted you—yes ;
And this (had you lived) you had never known,
I had trusted you, told you (let this atone !)
More, had I loved you less.

Thanatos, healer of all !
You have wedded once more my Soul and me,
Whelmed and washed down with a wild salt sea
Th' implacable ice-wall.

So. I kiss her gracious brow ;
There is peace between us. The faint, sick dawn
Creeps shivering in ; great rain tears mourn ;
But we know each other—now.



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A Be Bi Belof

ORIGINALLY issued in Longman's Magazine, (April to October, 1885), Prince Otto reappeared as a single volume in ample time for the holiday book-buyer of that year. No more interesting study in the evolution of Style exists than a comparison between the serial and its immediate careful revision in book form. This must have been done at a white heat. As an illustration we reprint below¹ a specimen of the discarded dialogue, showing with how much finer effect the last words of Seraphina as they now stand, close the book. Seldom is judicious excision so instantly apparent.

We may concede that from the first Prince Otto was regarded as exotic,—an alien growth, so to speak, amidst the lov-

¹ 'Lie close,' she said, with a deep thrill of speech. 'Stir not a finger, dear, or we may both awake. I, too, have dreamed my nightmare. Now, as I sit here, I begin to tell myself there was a Prince in fairy tales, who loved a thing of ice and folly; and under every trial, still loved on; loved the ingrate, the traitor, the insolent—and oh! still loved, or so I tell myself; and when at last God sent a soul into his froward mistress, his great heart leapt up, and he forgave her all.'

lier natural flowers of the Stevensonian garden. Critics there were, and possibly critics there are, unable or unwilling to admit the deep-veined humanity of the reconciliation scene between Seraphina and her Prince. For us there is in it that touch of nature—passionate, sensuous, true to love and life, without which the book had turned out a mere romantic fiasco. Nowhere else shall we find the natural history of the human passion-flower so exquisitely set forth as in the awakening of Seraphina to a love that will not fade away or die. It is as perfect as that other immortal scene, the meeting between Richard and Lucy in their brief idyl so soon to close in tragic night. Here Stevenson indeed became "the laureate of the joy of life"; and of this, despite all self-imposed limitations, *The Flight of the Princess* is an enduring exemplar. For we cannot but repeat, he was and ever will remain, "the laureate of the joy of life, of the life here and now."

FOR JULY:

SAINT GUIDO,

BY RICHARD JEFFERIES.

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

By

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*"Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare.
Nothing harms beneath the leaves
More than waves a swimmer cleaves.
Toss your heart up with the lark,
Foot at peace with mouse and worm,
Fair you fare.
Only at a dread of dark
Quaver, and they quit their form :
Thousand eyeballs under hoods
Have you by the hair.
Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare."*

GEORGE MEREDITH.

(The Woods of Westermains.)

*"Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know."*

SHAKESPEARE.

“IN thinking over Stevenson’s work one is apt to overlook *Prince Otto*. It is of so different a *genre*, it has almost a note of insincerity. Yet that very note is cognate with its subject, and in its rococo manner it is a perfect bit of novelistic *bric-a-brac*, a sort of romance in Dresden china. There is one chapter, however, that redeems it. The flight of the princess through the woods at night is one of the most perfect things Stevenson ever wrote. It is characteristic that it should come with the plunge from courtly artificialities into the open air and nature unadorned. The character drawing is as firm as elsewhere. . . . All bite the steel with clear-cut lines. Yes, *Prince Otto* is the Stevensonian crux; like not that and you are no true Stevensonian.”

JOSEPH JACOBS, (*Literary Studies*,
London, 1895.)

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS.

I.

THE porter, drawn by the growing turmoil, had vanished from the postern, and the door stood open on the darkness of the night. As Seraphina fled up the terraces, the cries and loud footing of the mob drew nearer the doomed palace; the rush was like the rush of cavalry; the sound of shattering lamps tingled above the rest; and overtopping all, she heard her own name bandied among the shouters. A bugle sounded at the door of the guard-room; one gun was fired; and then with the yell of hundreds, Mittwalden Palace was carried at a rush.

Sped by these dire sounds and voices, the Princess scaled the long garden, skimming like a bird the starlit stairways; crossed the Park, which was in that place narrow; and plunged upon the farther side into the rude shelter of the forest. So, at a bound, she left the discretion and the cheerful lamps of Palace evenings; ceased utterly to be a sovereign lady; and, falling from the whole height of civilization, ran forth into the woods, a ragged Cinderella.

She went direct before her through an open tract of the forest, full of brush and

birches, and where the starlight guided her; and beyond that again, must thread the columned blackness of a pine grove joining overhead the thatch of its long branches. At that hour, the place was breathless; a horror of night like a presence occupied that dungeon of the wood; and she went groping, knocking against the boles—her ear, betweenwhiles, strained to aching and yet unrewarded.

But the slope of the ground was upward, and encouraged her; and presently she issued on a rocky hill that stood forth above the sea of forest. All around were other hilltops, big and little; sable vales of forest between; overhead the open heaven and the brilliancy of countless stars; and along the western sky the dim forms of mountains. The glory of the great night laid hold upon her: her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; and her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, ploughing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

for man the individual; and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

There sate the Princess, beautifully looking upon beauty, in council with these glad advisers. Bright like pictures, clear like a voice in the porches of her ear, memory re-enacted the tumult of the evening: The Countess and the dancing fan, the big baron on his knees, the blood on the polished floor, the knocking, the swing of the litter down the avenue of lamps, the messenger, the cries of the charging mob; and yet all were far away and phantasmal, and she was still healingly conscious of the peace and glory of the night. She looked towards Mittwalden; and above the hilltop, which already hid it from her view, a throbbing redness hinted of fire. Better so; better so, that she should fall with tragic greatness, lit

by a blazing palace! She felt not a trace of pity for Gondremark or of concern for Grünewald; that period of her life was closed for ever, a wrench of wounded vanity alone surviving. She had but one clear idea; to flee;—and another, obscure and half-rejected, although still obeyed: to flee in the direction of the Felsenburg. She had a duty to perform, she must free Otto—so her mind said, very coldly; but her heart embraced the notion of that duty even with ardor, and her hands began to yearn for the grasp of kindness.

She rose, with a start of recollection, and plunged down the slope into the covert. The woods received and closed upon her. Once more, she wandered and hasted in a blot, uncheered, unpiloted. Here and there, indeed, through rents in the wood-roof, a glimmer attracted her; here and there, a tree stood out among its neighbours by some force of outline; here and there, a brushing among the leaves, a notable blackness, a dim shine, relieved, only to exaggerate, the solid oppression of the night and silence. And betweenwhiles, the unfeatured darkness would redouble and the whole ear of night

appear to be gloating on her steps. Now she would stand still, and the silence would grow and grow, till it weighed upon her breathing; and then she would address herself again to run, stumbling, falling, and still hurrying the more. And presently the whole wood rocked and began to run along with her. The noise of her own mad passage through the silence spread and echoed, and filled the night with terror. Panic hunted her: Panic from the trees reached forth with clutching branches; the darkness was lit up and peopled with strange forms and faces. She strangled and fled before her fears. And yet in the last fortress, reason, blown upon by these gusts of terror, still shone with a troubled light. She knew, yet could not act upon her knowledge; she knew that she must stop, and yet she still ran.

She was already near madness, when she broke suddenly into a narrow clearing. At the same time the din grew louder, and she became conscious of vague forms and fields of whiteness. And with that the earth gave way; she fell and found her feet again with an incredible shock to her senses, and her mind was swallowed up.

When she came again to herself, she was standing to the mid-leg in an icy eddy of a brook, and leaning with one hand on the rock from which it poured. The spray had wet her hair. She saw the white cascade, the stars wavering in the shaken pool, foam flitting, and high overhead the tall pines on either hand serenely drinking starshine; and in the sudden quiet of her spirit, she heard with joy the firm plunge of the cataract in the pool. She scrambled forth dripping. In the face of her proved weakness, to adventure again upon the horror of blackness in the groves were a suicide of life or reason. But here, in the alley of the brook, with the kind stars above her, and the moon presently swimming into sight, she could await the coming of day without alarm.

This lane of pine trees ran very rapidly down hill and wound among the woods; but it was a wider thoroughfare than the brook needed, and here and there were little dimpling lawns and coves of the forest, where the starshine slumbered. Such a lawn she paced, taking patience bravely; and now she looked up the hill and saw the brook coming down to her in a series of cascades; and

now approached the margin, where it welled among the rushes silently; and now gazed at the great company of heaven with an enduring wonder. The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven; and now that her fears were overpast, she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon that wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mittwalden Palace was but the crack and flash of a percussion cap. The countenance with which the pines regarded her begun insensibly to change; the grass too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious

thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret. She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars. Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the colour of the sky itself was the most wonderful; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morning. 'O!' she cried, joy catching at her voice, 'O! it is the dawn!'

In a breath she passed over the brook, and looped up her skirts and fairly ran in the dim alleys. As she ran, her ears were aware of many pipings, more beautiful than music; in the small dish-shaped houses in the fork of giant arms, where they had lain all night, lover by lover, warmly pressed, the bright-eyed, big-hearted singers began to awaken for the day. Her heart melted and flowed forth to them in kindness. And they, from their small and high perches in the clerestories of the wood cathedral, peered down sidelong at the ragged Princess as she

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

flitted below them on the carpet of the moss and tassel.

Soon she had struggled to a certain hilltop, and saw far before her the silent inflooding of the day. Out of the East it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street-lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the East was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the sun had floated up; and her startled eyes received day's first arrow, and quailed under the buffet. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day was come, plain and garish; and up the steep and solitary eastern heaven, the sun, victorious over his competitors, continued slowly and royally to mount.

Seraphina drooped for a little, leaning on a pine, the shrill joy of the woodlands mocking her. The shelter of the night, the thrilling and joyous changes of the dawn,

were over; and now, in the hot eye of the day, she turned uneasily and looked sighingly about her. Some way off among the lower woods, a pillar of smoke was mounting and melting in the gold and blue. There, surely enough, were human folk, the hearth-surrounders. Man's fingers had laid the twigs; it was man's breath that had quickened and encouraged the baby flames; and now, as the fire caught, it would be playing ruddily on the face of its creator. At the thought, she felt a-cold and little and lost in that great out-of-doors. The electric shock of the young sunbeams and the unhuman beauty of the woods began to irk and daunt her. The covert of the house, the decent privacy of rooms, the swept and regulated fire, all that denotes or beautifies the home life of man, began to draw her as with cords. The pillar of smoke was now risen into some stream of moving air; it began to lean out sideways in a pennon; and thereupon, as though the change had been a summons, Seraphina plunged once more into the labyrinth of the wood.

She left day upon the high ground. In the lower groves there still lingered the blue

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

early twilight and the seizing freshness of the dew. But here and there, above this field of shadow, the head of a great outspread pine was already glorious with day; and here and there, through the breaches of the hills, the sunbeams made a great and luminous entry. Here Seraphina hastened along forest paths. She had lost sight of the pilot smoke, which blew another way, and conducted herself in that great wilderness by the direction of the sun. But presently fresh signs bespoke the neighbourhood of man; felled trunks, white slivers from the axe, bundles of green boughs, and stacks of firewood. These guided her forward; until she came forth at last upon the clearing whence the smoke arose. A hut stood in the clear shadow, hard by a brook which made a series of inconsiderable falls; and on the threshold, the Princess saw a sun-burnt and hard-featured woodman, standing with his hands behind his back and gazing skyward.

She went to him directly: a beautiful bright-eyed, and haggard vision; splendidly arrayed and pitifully tattered; the diamond ear-drops still glittering in her ears; and

with the movement of her coming, one small breast showing and hiding among the ragged covert of the laces. At that ambiguous hour, and coming as she did from the great silence of the forest, the man drew back from the Princess as from something elfin.

‘I am cold,’ she said, ‘and weary. Let me rest beside your fire.’

The woodman was visibly commoved, but answered nothing.

‘I will pay,’ she said, and then repented of the words, catching perhaps a spark of terror from his frightened eyes. But, as usual, her courage rekindled brighter for the check. She put him from the door and entered; and he followed her in superstitious wonder.

Within the hut was rough and dark; but on the stone that served as hearth, twigs and a few dry branches burned with the brisk sounds and all the variable beauty of fire. The very sight of it composed her; she crouched hard by on the earth floor and shivered in the glow, and looked upon the eating blaze with admiration. The woodman was still staring at his guest; at the wreck of the rich dress, the bare arms, the bedraggled

laces and the gems. He found no word to utter.

‘Give me food,’ said she,—‘here, by the fire.’

He set down a pitcher of coarse wine, bread, a piece of cheese, and a handful of raw onions. The bread was hard and sour, the cheese like leather; even the onion, which ranks with the truffle and the nectarine in the chief place of honor of earth’s fruits, is not perhaps a dish for princesses when raw. But she ate, if not with appetite, with courage; and when she had eaten, did not disdain the pitcher. In all her life before, she had not tasted of gross food nor drunk after another; but a brave woman far more readily accepts a change of circumstances than the bravest man. All that while, the woodman continued to observe her furtively, many low thoughts of fear and greed contending in his eyes. She read them clearly, and she knew she must begone.

Presently she arose and offered him a florin.

‘Will that repay you?’ she asked.

But here the man found his tongue. ‘I must have more than that,’ said he.

'It is all I have to give you,' she returned, and passed him by serenely.

Yet her heart trembled, for she saw his hand stretched forth as if to arrest her, and his unsteady eyes wandering to his axe. A beaten path led westward from the clearing, and she swiftly followed it. She did not glance behind her. But as soon as the least turning of the path had concealed her from the woodman's eye, she slipped among the trees and ran till she deemed herself in safety.

By this time the strong sunshine pierced in a thousand places the pine-thatch of the forest, fired the red boles, irradiated the cool aisles of shadow, and burned in jewels on the grass. The gum of these trees was dearer to the senses than the gums of Araby; each pine, in the lusty morning sunlight, burned its own wood-incense; and now and then a breeze would rise and toss these rooted censers, and send shade and sun-gem flitting, swift as swallows, thick as bees; and wake a brushing bustle of sounds that murmured and went by.

On she passed, and up and down, in sun and shadow; now aloft on the bare ridge

among the rocks and birches, with the lizards and the snakes; and anon in the deep grove among sunless pillars. Now she followed wandering wood-paths, in the maze of valleys; and again, from a hilltop, beheld the distant mountains and the great birds circling under the sky. She would see afar off a nestling hamlet, and go round to avoid it. Below, she traced the course of the foam of mountain torrents. Nearer hand, she saw how the tender springs welled up in silence, or oozed in green moss; or in the more favoured hollows a whole family of infant rivers would combine, and tinkle in the stones, and lie in pools to be a bathing-place for sparrows, or fall from the sheer rock in rods of crystal. Upon all these things, as she still sped along in the bright air, she looked with a rapture of surprise and a joyful fainting of the heart; they seemed so novel, they touched so strangely home, they were so hued and scented, they were so beset and canopied by the dome of the blue air of heaven.

At length, when she was well weary, she came upon a wide and shallow pool. Stones stood in it like islands; bullrushes fringed the coast; the floor was paved with the pine

needles; and the pines themselves, whose roots made promontories, looked down silently on their green images. She crept to the margin and beheld herself with wonder, a hollow and bright eyed phantom, in the ruins of her palace robe. The breeze now shook her image; now it would be marred with flies; and at that she smiled; and from the fading circles, her counterpart smiled back to her and looked kind. She sat long in the warm sun, and pitied her bare arms that were all bruised and marred with falling, and marvelled to see that she was dirty, and could not grow to believe that she had gone so long in such a strange disorder.

Then, with a sigh, she addressed herself to make a toilet by that forest mirror, washed herself pure from all the stains of her adventure, took off her jewels and wrapped them in her handkerchief, rearranged the tatters of her dress, and took down the folds of her hair. She shook it round her face, and the pool repeated her thus veiled. Her hair had smelt like violets, she remembered Otto saying; and so now she tried to smell it, and then shook her head, and laughed a little, sadly, to herself.

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

The laugh was returned upon her in a childish echo. She looked up; and lo! two children looking on,—a small girl and a yet smaller boy, standing, like playthings, by the pool, below a spreading pine. Seraphina was not fond of children, and now she was startled to the heart.

‘Who are you?’ she cried, hoarsely.

The mites huddled together and drew back; and Seraphina’s heart reproached her that she should have frightened things so quaint and little, and yet alive with senses. She thought upon the birds and looked again at her two visitors; so little larger and so far more innocent. On their clear faces, as in a pool, she saw the reflection of their fears. With gracious purpose she arose.

‘Come,’ she said, ‘do not be afraid of me,’ and took a step towards them.

But alas! at the first movement, the poor babes in the wood turned and ran helter-skelter from the Princess.

The most desolate pang was struck into the girl’s heart. Here she was, twenty-two—soon twenty-three—and not a creature loved her; none but Otto; and would even he forgive? If she began weeping in these

woods alone, it would mean death or madness. Hastily she trod the thoughts out like a burning paper; hastily rolled up her locks, and with terror dogging her, and her whole bosom sick with grief, resumed her journey.

Past ten in the forenoon, she struck a highroad, marching in that place uphill between two stately groves, a river of sunlight; and here, dead weary, careless of consequences, and taking some courage from the human and civilized neighbourhood of the road, she stretched herself on the green margin in the shadow of a tree. Sleep closed on her, at first with a horror of fainting, but when she ceased to struggle, kindly embracing her. So she was taken home for a little, from all her toils and sorrows, to her Father's arms. And there in the meanwhile her body lay exposed by the highwayside, in tattered finery; and on either hand from the woods the birds came flying by and calling upon others, and debated in their own tongue this strange appearance.

II.

A little below where they stood, a good-sized brook passed below the road, which overleapt it in a single arch. On one bank of that loquacious water a footpath descended a green dell. Here it was rocky and stony, and lay on the steep scarps of the ravine; here it was choked with brambles; and there, in fairy haughs, it lay for a few paces evenly on the green turf. Like a sponge, the hill-side oozed with well-water. The burn kept growing both in force and volume; at every leap it fell with heavier plunges and span more widely in the pool. Great had been the labours of that stream, and great and agreeable the changes it had wrought. It had cut through dykes of stubborn rock, and now, like a blowing dolphin, spouted through the orifice; along all its humble coasts, it had undermined and rafted-down the goodlier timber of the forest; and on these rough clearings it now set and tended primrose gardens, and planted woods of willow, and made a favourite of the silver birch. Through all these friendly features the path, its human acolyte, conducted our

two wanderers downward,—Otto before, still pausing at the more difficult passages to lend assistance; the Princess following. From time to time, when he turned to help her, her face would lighten upon his—her eyes, half desperately, woo him. He saw, but dared not understand. ‘She does not love me,’ he told himself, with magnanimity. ‘This is remorse or gratitude; I were no gentleman, no, nor yet a man, if I presumed upon these pitiful concessions.’

Some way down the glen, the stream, already grown to a good bulk of water, was rudely dammed across, and about a third of it abducted in a wooden trough. Gayly the pure water, air’s first cousin, fleeted along the rude aqueduct, whose sides and floor it had made green with grasses. The path, bearing it close company, threaded a wilderness of briar and wild rose. And presently, a little in front, the brown top of a mill and the tall mill-wheel, spraying diamonds, arose in the narrows of the glen; at the same time the snoring music of the saws broke the silence.

The miller, hearing steps, came forth to his door, and both he and Otto started.

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

‘Good-morning, miller,’ said the Prince. ‘You were right, it seems, and I was wrong. I give you the news, and bid you to Mittwalden. My throne has fallen—great was the fall of it!—and your good friends of the Phoenix bear the rule.’

The red-faced miller looked supreme astonishment. ‘And your Highness?’ he gasped.

‘My Highness is running away,’ replied Otto, ‘straight for the frontier.’

‘Leaving Grünewald?’ cried the man. ‘Your father’s son? It’s not to be permitted!’

‘Do you arrest us, friend?’ asked Otto, smiling.

‘Arrest you? I?’ exclaimed the man. ‘For what does your Highness take me? Why, sir, I make sure there is not a man in Grünewald would lay hands upon you.’

‘O, many, many,’ said the Prince; ‘but from you, who were bold with me in my greatness, I should even look for aid in my distress.’

The miller became the colour of beetroot. ‘You may say so indeed,’ said he. ‘And meanwhile, will you and your lady step into my house?’

‘We have not time for that,’ replied the Prince; ‘but if you will oblige us with a cup of wine without here, you will give a pleasure and a service, both in one.’

The miller once more coloured to the nape. He hastened to bring forth wine in a pitcher and three bright crystal tumblers. ‘Your Highness must not suppose,’ he said, as he filled them, ‘that I am an habitual drinker. The time when I had the misfortune to encounter you, I was a trifle overtaken, I allow; but a more sober man than I am in my ordinary, I do not know where you are to look for; and even this glass that I drink to you (and to the lady) is quite an unusual recreation.’

The wine was drunk with due rustic courtesies; and then, refusing further hospitality, Otto and Seraphina once more proceeded to descend the glen, which now began to open and to be invaded by the taller trees.

‘I owed that man a reparation,’ said the Prince; ‘for when we met I was in the wrong and put a sore affront upon him. I judge by myself, perhaps; but I begin to think that no one is the better for a humiliation.’

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

‘But some have to be taught so,’ she replied.

‘Well, well,’ he said, with a painful embarrassment. ‘Well, well. But let us think of safety. My miller is all very good, but I do not pin my faith to him. To follow down this stream will bring us, but after innumerable windings, to my house. Here, up this glade, there lies a cross-cut—the world’s end for solitude—the very deer scarce visit it. Are you too tired, or could you pass that way?’

‘Choose the path, Otto. I will follow you,’ she said.

‘No,’ he replied, with a singular imbecility of manner and appearance, ‘but I meant the path was rough. It lies, all the way, by glade and dingle, and the dingles are both deep and thorny.’

‘Lead on,’ she said. ‘Are you not Otto the Hunter?’

They had now burst across a veil of under-wood, and were come into a lawn among the forest, very green and innocent, and solemnly surrounded by trees. Otto paused on the margin, looking about him with delight; then his glance returned to

Seraphina, as she stood framed in that sylvan pleasantness and looking at her husband with undecipherable eyes. A weakness both of the body and mind fell on him like the beginnings of sleep; the cords of his activity were relaxed, his eyes clung to her. 'Let us rest,' he said; and he made her sit down, and himself sat down beside her on the slope of an inconsiderable mound.

She sat with her eyes downcast, her slim hand dabbling in grass, like a maid waiting for love's summons. The sound of the wind in the forest swelled and sank, and drew near them with a running rush, and died away and away in the distance into fainting whispers. Nearer hand, a bird out of the deep covert uttered broken and anxious notes. All this seemed but a halting prelude to speech. To Otto it seemed as if the whole frame of nature were waiting for his words; and yet his pride kept him silent. The longer he watched that slender and pale hand plucking at the grasses, the harder and rougher grew the fight between pride and its kindly adversary.

'Seraphina,' he said at last, 'it is right you should know one thing: I never'

He was about to say 'doubted you,' but was that true? And, if true, was it generous to speak of it? Silence succeeded.

'I pray you, tell it me,' she said; 'tell it me, in pity.'

'I mean only this,' he resumed, 'that I understand all, and do not blame you. I understand how the brave woman must look down on the weak man. I think you were wrong in some things; but I have tried to understand it, and I do. I do not need to forget or to forgive, Seraphina, for I have understood.'

'I know what I have done,' she said. 'I am not so weak that I can be deceived with kind speeches. I know what I have been—I see myself. I am not worth your anger, how much less to be forgiven! In all this downfall and misery, I see only me and you: you, as you have been always; me, as I was—me, above all! O yes, I see myself; and what can I think?'

'Ah, then, let us reverse the parts!' said Otto. 'It is ourselves we cannot forgive, when we deny forgiveness to another—so a friend told me last night. On these terms, Seraphina, you see how generously I have

forgiven myself. But am not *I* to be forgiven? Come, then, forgive yourself—and me.'

She did not answer in words, but reached out her hand to him quickly. He took it; and as the smooth fingers settled and nestled in his, love ran to and fro between them in tender and transforming currents.

'Seraphina,' he cried, 'O, forget the past! Let me serve and help you; let me be your servant; it is enough for me to serve you and to be near you; let me be near you, dear—do not send me away.' He hurried his pleading like the speech of a frightened child. 'It is not love,' he went on; 'I do not ask for love; my love is enough'

'Otto!' she said, as if in pain.

He looked up into her face. It was wrung with the very ecstasy of tenderness and anguish; on her features, and most of all in her changed eyes, there shone the very light of love.

'Seraphina?' he cried aloud, and with a sudden, tuneless voice, 'Seraphina?'

'Look round you at this glade,' she cried, 'and where the leaves are coming on young trees, and the flowers begin to blossom.

THE FLIGHT OF THE PRINCESS

This is where we meet, meet for the first time; it is so much better to forget and to be born again. O, what a pit there is for sins—God's mercy, man's oblivion!

'Seraphina,' he said, 'let it be so, indeed; let all that was, be merely the abuse of dreaming; let me begin again, a stranger. I have dreamed, in a long dream, that I adored a girl unkind and beautiful; in all things my superior, but still cold like ice. And again I dreamed, and thought she changed and melted, glowed and turned to me. And I—who had no merit but a love, slavish and unerect—lay close, and durst not move for fear of waking.'

'Lie close,' she said, with a deep thrill of speech.

So they spake in the spring woods; and meanwhile, in Mittwalden Rath-haus, the Republic was declared.



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The Bi Belof

DEELY as the love of Nature existed in Richard Jefferies, there was an added touch of imagination when he came to connect the two,—Nature and human life. This touch of insight is seen at its sunniest in the story of Saint Guido, the child who wanders in the wood, and has speech with Flower and Tree, with Bird and Blossom.

In *The Story of My Heart* we get something other than this. There Jefferies develops a sense of 'far-off unhappy things'; the world has widened and a shadow falls upon his day. But in the earlier sketch only the child comes to us; the thought of human power and failure are alike far distant, nor has the hour when happy dreams depart knocked at life's door.

And in this brief story what wealth of historic association! A thin gold coin serves to call up Cæsar and his vanished legionaries. To the Wind, piping its eerie song for centuries over the grassy barrows of the long lost Anglo-Roman camp, it is scarce yesterday since the thin golden disk dropped beside the brook's marge. One is sure the *Wheat* knew its entire history. But

Guido is impatient; his papa's gun is of greater interest than a battered bit of metal even with a ship stamped on it. A lesser artist had given the coin's adventures at length. Jefferies knew better. It is only when Guido becomes a lad that Treasure Island will lure him on to wider emprise over 'antres vast and deserts idle.'

Somehow one can but think of other little ones whom Literature has made immortal. What shall be said of them? Of the baby queen,—her old-world child's garden survived long after the tragic Mary passed into night;—of Pet Marjorie whom Walter Scott carried in his arms; of six year old Hartley Coleridge beloved by Wordsworth? Is not our Guido one of this glorious company who never will grow old? Yes, he along with the Little Boy Blue whom the poet of the West has made our own, lives for us here, and will await us hereafter.



FOR AUGUST:

WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE:

MUSARUM LACHRYMÆ:

By

WILLIAM WATSON.

SAINT GUIDO
by
RICHARD JEFFERIES

*"O blessed Vision ! happy Child !
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.*

*I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy Lover ! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly !
O vain and causeless melancholy !
Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight
Preserve for thee, by individual right
A young Lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks . . .
Thou art a Dew-drop which the morn brings forth,
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at a touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life."*

WORDSWORTH.

“THERE is a very delightful old story which used to be given to children, though I have not seen it for a long time in the hands of any children. It was called “The Story without an End.” A child wandered among the flowers, who talked to him. That is the whole story. . . The story began without a beginning, and it came to a sudden stop without ending.

It is perhaps upon a reminiscence of this old story that Jefferies has based nearly all his own. They are very delightful, especially the short stories; but they seldom have any end. There is sometime but not often a story; there is generally only a succession of scenes—some delightful, all beautiful, and all original in the sense that nobody except Jefferies could possibly have written any of them. The child wanders. That is all.”

SIR WALTER BESANT.

(The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies.)

SAINT GUIDO.

ST. GUIDO ran out at the garden gate into a sandy lane, and down the lane till he came to a grassy bank. He caught hold of the bunches of grass and so pulled himself up. There was a footpath on the top which went straight in between fir-trees, and as he ran along they stood on each side of him like green walls. They were very near together, and even at the top the space between them was so narrow that the sky seemed to come down, and the clouds to be sailing but just over them, as if they would catch and tear in the fir-trees. The path was so little used that it had grown green, and as he ran he knocked dead branches out of his way. Just as he was getting tired of running he reached the end of the path, and came out into a wheat-field. The wheat did not grow very closely, and the spaces were filled with azure corn-flowers. St. Guido thought he was safe away now, so he stopped to look.

Those thoughts and feelings which are not sharply defined but have a haze of distance and beauty about them are always the dearest. His name was not really Guido, but those who loved him had called him so in order to try and express their hearts about

him. For they thought if a great painter could be a little boy, then he would be something like this one. They were not very learned in the history of painters: they had heard of Raphael, but Raphael was too elevated, too much of the sky, and of Titian, but Titian was fond of feminine loveliness, and in the end somebody said Guido was a dreamy name, as if it belonged to one who was full of faith. Those golden curls shaking about his head as he ran and filling the air with radiance round his brow, looked like a Nimbus or circlet of glory. So they called him St. Guido, and a very, very wild saint he was.

St. Guido stopped in the cornfield, and looked all round. There were the fir-trees behind him—a thick wall of green—hedges on the right and the left, and the wheat sloped down towards an ash-copse in the hollow. No one was in the field, only the fir-trees, the green hedges, the yellow wheat, and the sun overhead. Guido kept quite still, because he expected that in a minute the magic would begin, and something would speak to him. His cheeks which had been flushed with running grew less hot, but I

cannot tell you the exact colour they were, for his skin was so white and clear, it would not tan under the sun, yet being always out of doors it had taken the faintest tint of golden brown mixed with rosiness. His blue eyes which had been wide open, as they always were when full of mischief, became softer, and his long eyelashes drooped over them. But as the magic did not begin, Guido walked on slowly into the wheat, which rose nearly to his head, though it was not yet so tall as it would be before the reapers came. He did not break any of the stalks, or bend them down and step on them; he passed between them, and they yielded on either side. The wheat-ears were pale gold, having only just left off their green, and they surrounded him on all sides as if he were bathing.

A butterfly painted a velvety red with white spots came floating along the surface of the corn, and played round his cap, which was a little higher, and was so tinted by the sun that the butterfly was inclined to settle on it. Guido put up his hand to catch the butterfly, forgetting his secret in his desire to touch it. The butterfly was too quick—

with a snap of his wings disdainfully mocking the idea of catching him, away he went. Guido nearly stepped on a humble-bee—buzz-zz!—the bee was so alarmed he actually crept up Guido's knickers to the knee, and even then knocked himself against a wheat-ear when he started to fly. Guido kept quite still while the humble-bee was on his knee, knowing that he should not be stung if he did not move. He knew, too, that humble-bees have stings though people often say they have not, and the reason people think they do not possess them is because humble-bees are so good-natured and never sting unless they are very much provoked.

Next he picked a corn buttercup; the flowers were much smaller than the great buttercups which grew in the meadows, and these were not golden but coloured like brass. His foot caught in a creeper, and he nearly tumbled—it was a bine of bindweed which went twisting round and round two stalks of wheat in a spiral, binding them together as if some one had wound string about them. There was one ear of wheat which had black specks on it, and another which had so much black that the grains seemed changed and

gone leaving nothing but blackness. He touched it and it stained his hands like a dark powder, and then he saw that it was not perfectly black as charcoal is, it was a little red. Something was burning up the corn there just as if fire had been set to the ears. Guido went on and found another place where there was hardly any wheat at all, and those stalks that grew were so short they only came above his knee. The wheat-ears were thin and small, and looked as if there was nothing but chaff. But this place being open was full of flowers, such lovely azure corn-flowers which the people call blue-bottles.

Guido took two; they were curious flowers with knobs surrounded with little blue flowers like a lady's bonnet. They were a beautiful blue, not like any other blue, not like the violets in the garden, or the sky over the trees, or the geranium in the grass, or the bird's-eyes by the path. He loved them and held them tight in his hand, and went on, leaving the red pimpernel wide open to the dry air behind him, but the May-weed was everywhere. The May-weed had white flowers like a moon-daisy, but not

so large, and leaves like moss. He could not walk without stepping on these mossy tufts, though he did not want to hurt them. So he stooped and stroked the moss-like leaves and said, "I do not want to hurt you, but you grow so thick I cannot help it." In a minute afterwards as he was walking he heard a quick rush, and saw the wheat-ears sway this way and that as if a puff of wind had struck them.

Guido stood still and his eyes opened very wide, he had forgotten to cut a stick to fight with: he watched the wheat-ears sway, and could see them move for some distance, and he did not know what it was. Perhaps it was a wild boar or a yellow lion, or some creature no one had ever seen; he would not go back, but he wished he had cut a nice stick. Just then a swallow swooped down and came flying over the wheat so close that Guido almost felt the flutter of his wings, and as he passed he whispered to Guido that it was only a hare. "Then why did he run away?" said Guido; "I should not have hurt him." But the swallow had gone up high into the sky again, and did not hear him. All the time Guido was descending the

slope, for little feet always go down the hill as water does, and when he looked back he found that he had left the fir-trees so far behind he was in the middle of the field. If any one had looked they could hardly have seen him, and if he had taken his cap off they could not have done so because the yellow curls would be so much the same colour as the yellow corn. He stooped to see how nicely he could hide himself, then he knelt, and in a minute sat down, so that the wheat rose up high above him.

Another humble-bee went over along the tips of the wheat—burr-rr—as he passed; then a scarlet fly, and next a bright yellow wasp who was telling a friend flying behind him that he knew where there was such a capital piece of wood to bite up into tiny pieces and make into paper for the nest in the thatch, but his friend wanted to go to the house because there was a pear quite ripe there on the wall. Next came a moth, and after the moth a golden fly, and three gnats, and a mouse—ran along the dry ground with a curious sniffing rustle close to Guido. A shrill cry came down out of the air, and looking up he saw two swifts turning circles,

and as they passed each other they shrieked—their voices were so shrill they shrieked. They were only saying that in a month their little swifts in the slates would be able to fly. While he sat so quiet on the ground and hidden by the wheat, he heard a cuckoo such a long way off it sounded like a watch when it is covered up. "Cuckoo" did not come full and distinct—it was such a tiny little "cuckoo" caught in the hollow of Guido's ear. The cuckoo must have been a mile away.

Suddenly he thought something went over, and yet he did not see it—perhaps it was the shadow—and he looked up and saw a large bird not very far up, not farther than he could fling, or shoot his arrows, and the bird was fluttering his wings, but did not move away farther, as if he had been tied in the air. Guido knew it was a hawk, and the hawk was staying there to see if there was a mouse or a little bird in the wheat. After a minute the hawk stopped fluttering and lifted his wings together as a butterfly does when he shuts his, and down the hawk came, straight into the corn. "Go away!" shouted Guido jumping up, and flinging his

cap, and the hawk, dreadfully frightened and terribly cross, checked himself and rose again with an angry rush. So the mouse escaped, but Guido could not find his cap for some time. Then he went on, and still the ground sloping sent him down the hill till he came close to the copse.

Some sparrows came out from the copse, and he stopped and saw one of them perch on a stalk of wheat, with one foot above the other sideways, so that he could pick at the ear and get the corn. Guido watched the sparrow clear the ear, then he moved, and the sparrows flew back to the copse, where they chattered at him for disturbing them. There was a ditch between the corn and the copse, and a streamlet; he picked up a stone and threw it in, and the splash frightened a rabbit, who slipped over the bank and into a hole. The boughs of an oak reached out across to the corn, and made so pleasant a shade that Guido, who was very hot from walking in the sun, sat down on the bank of the streamlet with his feet dangling over it, and watched the floating grass sway slowly as the water ran. Gently he leaned back till his back rested on the sloping ground—he

raised one knee, and left the other foot over the verge where the tip of the tallest rushes touched it. Before he had been there a minute he remembered the secret which a fern had taught him.

First, if he wanted to know anything, or to hear a story, or what the grass was saying, or the oak-leaves singing, he must be careful not to interfere as he had done just now with the butterfly by trying to catch him. Fortunately, that butterfly was a nice butterfly, and very kindhearted, but sometimes, if you interfered with one thing, it would tell another thing, and they would all know in a moment, and stop talking, and never say a word. Once, while they were all talking pleasantly, Guido caught a fly in his hand, he felt his hand tickle as the fly stepped on it, and he shut up his little fist so quickly he caught the fly in the hollow between the palm and his fingers. The fly went buzz, and rushed to get out, but Guido laughed, so the fly buzzed again, and just told the grass, and the grass told the bushes, and everything knew in a moment, and Guido never heard another word all that day. Yet sometimes now they all knew something

about him ; they would go on talking. You see, they all rather petted and spoiled him. Next, if Guido did not hear them conversing, the fern said he must touch a little piece of grass and put it against his cheek, or a leaf, and kiss it, and say, "Leaf, leaf, tell them I am here."

Now, while he was lying down, and the tip of the rushes touched his foot, he remembered this, so he moved the rush with his foot and said, "Rush, rush, tell them I am here." Immediately there came a little wind, and the wheat swung to and fro, the oak-leaves rustled, the rushes bowed, and the shadows slipped forwards and back again. Then it was still, and the nearest wheat-ear to Guido nodded his head, and said in a very low tone, "Guido, dear, just this minute I do not feel very happy, although the sunshine is so warm, because I have been thinking, for we have been in one or other of these fields of your papa's a thousand years this very year. Every year we have been sown, and weeded, and reaped, and garnered. Every year the sun has ripened us, and the rain made us grow; every year for a thousand years."

"What did you see all that time?" said Guido.

"The swallows came," said the Wheat, "and flew over us, and sang a little sweet song, and then they went up into the chimneys and built their nests."

"At my house?" said Guido.

"Oh, no, dear, the house I was then thinking of is gone, like a leaf withered and lost. But we have not forgotten any of the songs they sang us, nor have the swallows that you see to-day—one of them spoke to you just now—forgotten what we said to their ancestors. Then the blackbirds came out in us and ate the creeping creatures, so that they should not hurt us, and went up into the oaks and whistled such beautiful sweet low whistles. Not in those oaks, dear, where the blackbirds whistle to-day; even the very oaks have gone, though they were so strong that one of them defied the lightning, and lived years and years after it struck him. One of the very oldest of the old oaks in the copse, dear, is his grandchild. If you go into the copse you will find an oak which has only one branch; he is so old, he has only that branch left. He sprang up from

an acorn dropped from an oak that grew from an acorn dropped from the oak the lightning struck. So that is three oak lives, Guido dear, back to the time I was thinking of just now. And that oak under whose shadow you are now lying is the fourth of them, and he is quite young, though he is so big.

"A jay sowed the acorn from which he grew up; the jay was in the oak with one branch, and some one frightened him, and as he flew he dropped the acorn which he had in his bill just there, and now you are lying in the shadow of the tree. So you see, it is a very long time ago, when the blackbirds came and whistled up in those oaks I was thinking of, and that was why I was not very happy."

"But you have heard the blackbirds whistling ever since?" said Guido; "and there was such a big black one up in our cherry tree this morning, and I shot my arrow at him and very nearly hit him. Besides, there is a blackbird whistling now—you listen. There, he's somewhere in the copse. Why can't you listen to him, and be happy now?"

"I will be happy, dear, as you are here, but still it is a long, long time, and then I think, after I am dead, and there is more wheat in my place, the blackbirds will go on whistling for another thousand years after me. For of course I did not hear them all that time ago myself, dear, but the wheat which was before me heard them and told me. They told me, too, and I know it is true, that the cuckoo came and called all day till the moon shone at night, and began again in the morning before the dew had sparkled in the sunrise. The dew dries very soon on wheat, Guido dear, because wheat is so dry; first the sunrise makes the tips of the wheat ever so faintly rosy, then it grows yellow, then as the heat increases it becomes white at noon, and golden in the afternoon, and white again under the moonlight. Besides which wide shadows come over from the clouds, and a wind always follows the shadow and waves us, and every time we sway to and fro that alters our colour. A rough wind gives us one tint, and heavy rain another, and we look different on a cloudy day to what we do on a sunny one. All these colours changed on us when the black-

bird was whistling in the oak the lightning struck, the fourth one backwards from me; and it makes me sad to think that after four more oaks have gone, the same colours will come on the wheat that will grow then. It is thinking about those past colours, and songs, and leaves, and of the colours and the sunshine, and the songs, and the leaves that will come in the future that makes to-day so much. It makes to-day a thousand years long backwards, and a thousand years long forwards, and makes the sun so warm, and the air so sweet, and the butterflies so lovely, and the hum of the bees, and everything so delicious. We cannot have enough of it."

"No, that we cannot," said Guido. "Go on, you talk so nice and low. I feel sleepy and jolly. Talk away, old Wheat."

"Let me see," said the Wheat. "Once on a time while the men were knocking us out of the ear on a floor with flails, which are sticks with little hinges——"

"As if I did not know what a flail was!" said Guido. "I hit old John with the flail, and Ma gave him a shilling not to be cross."

"While they were knocking us with the

hard sticks," the Wheat went on, "we heard them talking about a king who was shot with an arrow like yours in the forest—it slipped from a tree, and went into him instead of into the deer. And long before that the men came up the river—the stream in the ditch there runs into the river—in rowing ships—how you would like one to play in, Guido! For they were not like the ships now which are machines, they were rowing ships—men's ships—and came right up into the land ever so far, all along the river up to the place where the stream in the ditch runs in; just where your papa took you in the punt, and you got the waterlilies, the white ones."

"And wetted my sleeve right up my arm—oh, I know! I can row you, old Wheat; I can row as well as my papa can."

"But since the rowing ships came, the ploughs have turned up this ground a thousand times," said the Wheat; "and each time the furrows smelt sweeter, and this year they smelt sweetest of all. The horses have such glossy coats, and such fine manes, and they are so strong and beautiful. They drew the ploughs along and made the ground

give up its sweetness and savour, and while they were doing it, the spiders in the copse spun their silk along from the ashpoles, and the mist in the morning weighed down their threads. It was so delicious to come out of the clods as we pushed our green leaves up and felt the rain, and the wind, and the warm sun. Then a little bird came in the copse and called, 'Sip—sip, sip, sip, sip,' such a sweet low song, and the larks ran along the ground in between us, and there were blue-bells in the copse, and anemones; till by-and-by the sun made us yellow, and the blue flowers that you have in your hand came out. I cannot tell you how many there have been of these flowers since the oak was struck by the lightning, in all the thousand years there must have been altogether—I cannot tell you how many."

' "Why didn't I pick them all?" said Guido.

"Do you know," said the Wheat, "we have thought so much more, and felt so much more, since your people took us, and ploughed for us, and sowed us, and reaped us. We are not like the same wheat we used to be before your people touched us, when we grew wild, and there were huge

great things in the woods and marshes which I will not tell you about lest you should be frightened. Since we have felt your hands, and you have touched us, we have felt so much more. Perhaps that was why I was not very happy till you came, for I was thinking quite as much about your people as about us, and how all the flowers of all those thousand years, and all the songs, and the sunny days were gone, and all the people were gone too, who had heard the blackbirds whistle in the oak the lightning struck. And those that are alive now—there will be cuckoos calling, and the eggs in the thrush's nests, and blackbirds whistling, and blue corn-flowers, a thousand years after every one of them is gone.

“So that is why it is so sweet this minute, and why I want you, and your people, dear, to be happy now and to have all these things; and to agree so as not to be so anxious and careworn, but to come out with us, or sit by us, and listen to the blackbirds, and hear the wind rustle us, and be happy. Oh, I wish I could make them happy, and do away with all their care and anxiety, and give you all heaps and heaps of flowers! Don't go away,

darling, do you lie still, and I will talk and sing to you, and you can pick some more flowers when you get up. There is a beautiful shadow there, and I heard the streamlet say that he would sing a little to you; he is not very big, he cannot sing very loud. By-and-by, I know, the sun will make us as dry as dry, and darker, and then the reapers will come while the spiders are spinning their silk again—this time it will come floating in the blue air, for the air seems blue if you look up.

“It is a great joy to your people, dear, when the reaping time arrives: the harvest is a great joy to you when the thistledown comes rolling along in the wind. So that I shall be happy even when the reapers cut me down, because I know it is for you, and your people, my love. The strong men will come to us gladly, and the women, and the little children will sit in the shade and gather great white trumpets of convolvulus, and come to tell their mothers how they saw the young partridges in the next field. But there is one thing we do not like, and that is, all the labour and the misery. Why cannot your people have us without so much labour,

and why are so many of you unhappy? Why cannot they be all happy with us as you are, dear? For hundreds and hundreds of years now the wheat every year has been sorrowful for your people, and I think we get more sorrowful every year about it, because as I was telling you just now the flowers go, and the swallows go, the old, old oaks go, and that oak will go, under the shade of which you are lying, Guido; and if your people do not gather the flowers now, and watch the swallows, and listen to the blackbirds whistling, as you are listening now while I talk, then Guido, my love, they will never pick any flowers, nor hear any birds' songs. They think they will, they think that when they have toiled, and worked a long time, almost all their lives, then they will come to the flowers, and the birds, and be joyful in the sunshine. But no, it will not be so, for then they will be old themselves, and their ears dull, and their eyes dim, so that the birds will sound a great distance off, and the flowers will not seem bright.

"Of course, we know that the greatest part of your people cannot help themselves, and must labour on like the reapers till their

ears are full of the dust of age. That only makes us more sorrowful, and anxious that things should be different. I do not suppose we should think about them had we not been in man's hand so long that now we have got to feel with man. Every year makes it more pitiful because then there are more flowers gone, and added to the vast numbers of those gone before, and never gathered, or looked at, though they could have given so much pleasure. And all the work and labour, and thinking, and reading and learning that your people do ends in nothing—not even one flower. We cannot understand why it should be so. There are thousands of wheat-ears in this field, more than you would know how to write down with your pencil, though you have learned your tables, sir. Yet all of us thinking, and talking, cannot understand why it is when we consider how clever your people are, and how they bring ploughs, and steam-engines, and put up wires along the roads to tell you things when you are miles away, and sometimes we are sown where we can hear the hum, hum, all day of the children learning in the school. The butterflies flutter over us, and the sun

shines, and the doves are very, very happy at their nest, but the children go on hum, hum inside this house, and learn, learn. So we suppose you must be very clever, and yet you cannot manage this. All your work is wasted, and you labour in vain—you dare not leave it a minute.

“If you left it a minute it would all be gone; it does not mount up and make a store, so that all of you could sit by it and be happy. Directly you leave off you are hungry, and thirsty, and miserable like the beggars that tramp along the dusty road here. All the thousand years of labour since this field was first ploughed have not stored up anything for you. It would not matter about the work so much if you were only happy; the bees work every year, but they are happy; the doves build a nest every year, but they are very, very happy. We think it must be because you do not come out to us and be with us, and think more as we do. It is not because your people have not got plenty to eat and drink—you have as much as the bees. Why just look at us! Look at the wheat that grows all over the world; all the figures that were ever written

in pencil could not tell how much, it is such an immense quantity. Yet your people starve and die of hunger every now and then, and we have seen the wretched beggars tramping along the road. We have known of times when there was a great pile of us, almost a hill piled up, it was not in this country, it was in another warmer country, and yet no one dared to touch it—they died at the bottom of the hill of wheat. The earth is full of the skeletons of people who have died of hunger. They are dying now this minute in your big cities, with nothing but stones all round them, stone walls and stone streets; not jolly stones like those you threw in the water, dear—hard, unkind stones that make them cold and let them die, while we are growing here, millions of us, in the sunshine with the butterflies floating over us. This makes us unhappy; I was very unhappy this morning till you came running over and played with us.

“It is not because there is not enough: it is because your people are so short-sighted, so jealous and selfish, and so curiously infatuated with things that are not so good as your old toys which you have flung away

and forgotten. And you teach the children hum, hum, all day to care about such silly things, and to work for them and to look to them as the object of their lives. It is because you do not share us among you without price or difference; because you do not share the great earth among you fairly, without spite and jealousy and avarice; because you will not agree; you silly, foolish people to let all the flowers wither for a thousand years while you keep each other at a distance, instead of agreeing and sharing them! Is there something in you—as there is poison in the nightshade, you know it, dear, your papa told you not to touch it—is there a sort of poison in your people that works them up into a hatred of one another? Why, then, do you not agree and have all things, all the great earth can give you, just as we have the sunshine and the rain? How happy your people could be if they would only agree! But you go on teaching even the little children to follow the same silly objects, hum, hum, hum, all the day, and they will grow up to hate each other, and to try which can get the most round things—you have one in your pocket.”

"Sixpence," said Guido. "It's quite a new one."

"And other things quite as silly," the wheat continued. "All the time the flowers are flowering, but they will go, even the oaks will go. We think the reason you do not all have plenty, and why you do not do only just a little work, and why you die of hunger if you leave off, and why so many of you are unhappy in body and mind, and all the misery is because you have not got a spirit like the wheat, like us; you will not agree, and you will not share, and you will hate each other, and you will be so avaricious, and you will *not* touch the flowers, or go into the sunshine (you would rather half of you died among the hard stones first), and you will teach your children hum, hum, to follow in some foolish course that has caused you all this unhappiness a thousand years, and you will *not* have a spirit like us, and feel like us. Till you have a spirit like us, and feel like us, you will never, never be happy. Lie still, dear; the shadow of the oak is broad and will not move from you for a long time yet."

"But perhaps Paul will come up to my house, and Percy and Morna."

"Look up in the oak very quietly, don't move, just open your eyes and look," said the Wheat, who was very cunning. Guido looked and saw a lovely little bird climbing up a branch. It was chequered, black and white, like a very small magpie, only without such a long tail, and it had a spot of red about its neck. It was a pied woodpecker, not the large green woodpecker, but another kind. Guido saw it go round the branch, and then some way up, and round again till it came to a place that pleased it, and then the woodpecker struck the bark with its bill, tap-tap. The sound was quite loud, ever so much more noise than such a tiny bill seemed able to make. Tap-tap! If Guido had not been still so that the bird had come close he would never have found it among the leaves. Tap-tap! After it had picked out all the insects there, the woodpecker flew away over the ashpoles of the copse.

"I should just like to stroke him," said Guido. "If I climbed up into the oak perhaps he would come again, and I could catch him."

"No," said the Wheat, "he only comes once a day."

SAINT GUIDO

"Then tell me stories," said Guido, imperiously.

"I will if I can," said the Wheat. "Once upon a time, when the oak the lightning struck was still living, and when the wheat was green in this very field, a man came staggering out of the wood, and walked out into it. He had an iron helmet on, and he was wounded, and his blood stained the green wheat red as he walked. He tried to get to the streamlet, which was wider then, Guido dear, to drink, for he knew it was there, but he could not reach it. He fell down and died in the green wheat, dear, for he was very much hurt with a sharp spear; but more so with hunger and thirst."

"I am so sorry," said Guido; "and now I look at you, why you are all thirsty and dry, you nice old Wheat, and the ground is as dry as dry under you; I will get you something to drink."

And down he scrambled into the ditch, setting his foot firm on a root, for though he was so young, he knew how to get down to the water without wetting his feet, or falling in, and how to climb up a tree, and everything jolly. Guido dipped his hand in

the streamlet, and flung the water over the wheat five or six good sprinklings till the drops hung on the wheat-ears. Then he said, "Now you are better."

"Yes, dear, thank you, my love," said the Wheat, who was very pleased, though of course the water was not enough to wet its roots. Still it was pleasant, like a very little shower. Guido lay down on his chest this time, with his elbows on the ground, propping his head up, and as he now faced the wheat, he could see in between the stalks.

"Lie still," said the Wheat, "the corn-crake is not very far off, he has come up here since your papa told the mowers to mow the meadow, and very likely if you stay quiet you will see him. If you do not understand all I say, never mind, dear; the sunshine is warm, but not too warm in the shade, and we all love you, and want you to be as happy as ever you can be."

"It is jolly to be quite hidden like this," said Guido. "No one could find me; if Paul were to look all day he would never find me; even papa could not find me. Now go on and tell me stories."

"Ever so many times, when the oak the lightning struck was young," said the Wheat, "great stags used to come out of the wood and feed on the green wheat; it was early in the morning when they came. Such great stags, and so proud, and yet so timid, the least thing made them go bound, bound, bound."

"Oh, I know!" said Guido; "I saw some jump over the fence in the forest—I am going there again soon. If I take my bow I will shoot one!"

"But there are no deer here now," said the Wheat; "they have been gone a long, long time; though I think your papa has one of their antlers."

"Now, how did you know that?" said Guido; "you have never been to our house, and you cannot see in from here because the fir copse is in the way; how did you find out these things?"

"Oh!" said the Wheat, laughing, "we have lots of ways of finding out things. Don't you remember the swallow that swooped down and told you not to be frightened at the hare? The swallow has his nest at your house, and he often flies by

your windows and looks in, and he told me. The birds tell us lots of things, and all about what is over the sea."

"But that is not a story," said Guido.

"Once upon a time," said the Wheat, "when the oak the lightning struck was alive, your papa's papa's papa, ever so much farther back than that, had all the fields round here, all that you can see from Acre Hill. And do you know it happened that in time every one of them was lost or sold, and your family, Guido dear, were homeless—no house, no garden or orchard, and no dogs or guns, or anything jolly. One day the papa that was then came along the road with *his* little Guido, and they were beggars, dear, and had no place to sleep, and they slept all night in the wheat in this very field close to where the hawthorn bush grows now—where you picked the May flowers, you know, my love. They slept there all the summer night, and the fern owls flew to and fro, and the bats and crickets chirped, and the stars shone faintly, as if they were made pale by the heat. The poor papa never had a house, but that little Guido lived to grow up a great man, and he

worked so hard, and he was so clever, and every one loved him, which was the best of all things. He bought this very field and then another, and another, and got such a lot of the old fields back again, and the goldfinches sang for joy, and so did the larks and the thrushes, because they said what a kind man he was. Then his son got some more of them, till at last your papa bought ever so many more. But we often talk about the little boy who slept in the wheat in this field, which was his father's father's field. If only the wheat then could have helped him, and been kind to him, you may be sure it would. We love you so much we like to see the very crumbs left by the men who do the hoeing when they eat their crusts; we wish they could have more to eat, but we like to see their crumbs, which you know are made of wheat, so that we have done them some good at least."

"That's not a story," said Guido.

"There's a gold coin here somewhere," said the Wheat, "such a pretty one, it would make a capital button for your jacket, dear, or for your mamma; that is all any sort of money is good for; I wish all the coins

were made into buttons for little Guido."

"Where is it?" said Guido.

"I can't exactly tell where it is," said the Wheat. "It was very near me once, and I thought the next thunder's rain would wash it down into the streamlet—it has been here ever so long, it came here first just after the oak the lightning split died. And it has been rolled about by the ploughs ever since, and no one has ever seen it; I thought it must go into the ditch at last, but when the men came to hoe one of them knocked it back, and then another kicked it along—it was covered with earth—and then, one day, a rook came and split the clod open with his bill, and pushed the pieces first one side and then the other, and the coin went one way, but I did not see; I must ask a humble-bee, or a mouse, or a mole, or some one who knows more about it. It is very thin, so that if the rook's bill had struck it, his strong bill would have made a dent in it, and there is, I think, a ship marked on it."

"Oh, I must have it! A ship! Ask a humble-bee directly; be quick!"

Bang! There was a loud report, a gun had gone off in the copse.

SAINT GUIDO

“That’s my papa,” shouted Guido. “I’m sure that was my papa’s gun!” Up he jumped, and getting down the ditch, stepped across the water, and, seizing a hazel-bough to help himself, climbed up the bank. At the top he slipped through the fence by the oak and so into the copse. He was in such a hurry he did not mind the thistles or the boughs that whipped him as they sprang back, he scrambled through, meeting the vapour of the gunpowder and the smell of sulphur. In a minute he found a green path, and in the path was his papa, who had just shot a cruel crow. The crow had been eating the birds’ eggs, and picking the little birds to pieces.



The Bi Belof

IN a review of the first edition of Wordsworth's *Grave and Other Poems* (1890), Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse¹ said of the title poem: "If Mr. William Watson had written no other, . . . he would deserve a place among contemporary writers of verse; for if this poem is scarcely a 'new departure,' it certainly does not follow the lead of any living poet."

Of Lachrymæ Musarum, printed two years later, so much, perhaps, cannot be advanced. In it various contemporary touches are discernable; even the slight but unmistakable conveyance of a single word wakens recollection of that word's one transcendent handling,—'But where are the snows of yester-year.' Admitting this

¹ Mr. Monkhouse still remains a poet of unsuspected excellence. His *Corn and Poppies*, (350 copies, London, 1890), appears in no later edition. It has one poem—*A Dead March*—that may be read beside *A Toccata* of Galuppi's, and suffer no sense of blemish.

limitation, Lachrymæ Musarum has a beauty, let us say, such as an exquisitely composed cento might afford us. Even if derivative, it possesses the art of derivation. Its peroration is well nigh perfect. There is the divine faculty of dying proudly about it.

It is, then, no reproach to our poet if compared with Thyrsis or the Ave Atque Vale, his elegiacs seem less than they. That these two poems are beautiful in themselves suffices. It is a minor matter when a thing of beauty does not entirely satisfy the canon of comparative criticism.



FOR SEPTEMBER :

THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE

By

WALTER PATER.

I. WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE
II. LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM
By
WILLIAM WATSON.

DEDICATION

TO JAMES BROMLEY,
OF
LATHOM, LANCASHIRE.

ERE vandal lords with lust of gold accurst
Deface each hallowed hillside we revere—
Ere cities in their million-throated thirst
Menace each sacred mere—
Let us give thanks because one nook hath been
Unflooded yet by desecration's wave,
The little churchyard in the valley green
That holds our Wordsworth's grave.

'Twas there I plucked these elegiac blooms,
There where he rests 'mid comrades fit and few,
And thence I bring this growth of classic tombs,
An offering, friend, to you—
You who have loved like me his simple themes,
Loved his sincere large accent nobly plain,
And loved the land whose mountains and whose streams
Are lovelier for his strain.

It may be that his manly chant, beside
More dainty numbers, seems a rustic tune;
It may be, thought has broadened since he died
Upon the century's noon;

It may be that we can no longer share
The faith which from his fathers he received ;
It may be that our doom is to despair
Where he with joy believed ;—

Enough that there is none since risen who sings
A song so gotten of the immediate soul,
So instant from the vital fount of things
Which is our source and goal ;
And though at touch of later hands there float
More artful tones than from his lyre he drew,
Ages may pass ere trills another note
So sweet, so great, so true.

WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE.

I.

THE old rude church, with bare, bald tower, is here ;
Beneath its shadow high-born Rotha flows ;
Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near,
And with cool murmur lulling his repose.

Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near.
His hills, his lakes, his streams are with him yet.
Surely the heart that read her own heart clear
Nature forgets not soon : 'tis we forget.

We that with vagrant soul his fixity
Have slighted ; faithless, done his deep faith wrong ;
Left him for poorer loves, and bowed the knee
To misbegotten strange new gods of song.

Yet, led by hollow ghost or beckoning elf
Far from her homestead to the desert bourn,
The vagrant soul returning to herself
Wearily wise, must needs to him return.

To him and to the powers that with him dwell :—
Inflowings that divulged not whence they came ;
And that secluded spirit unknowable,
The mystery we make darker with a name ;

The Somewhat which we name but cannot know,
Ev'n as we name a star and only see
His quenchless flashings forth, which ever show
And ever hide him, and which are not he.

II.

Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave!

When thou wast born, what birth-gift hadst thou then?
To thee what wealth was that the Immortals gave,
The wealth thou gavest in thy turn to men?

Not Milton's keen, translunar music thine;
Not Shakspeare's cloudless, boundless human view;
Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;
Not yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.

What hadst thou that could make so large amends
For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed,
Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends?—
Thou hadst, for weary feet, the gift of rest.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,
From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,
Men turned to thee and found—not blast and blaze,
Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,
There in white languors to decline and cease;
But peace whose names are also rapture, power,
Clear sight, and love: for these are parts of peace.

III.

I hear it vouched the Muse is with us still;—
If less divinely frenzied than of yore,
In lieu of feelings she has wondrous skill
To simulate emotion felt no more.

Not such the authentic Presence pure, that made
This valley vocal in the great days gone!—
In *his* great days, while yet the spring-time played
About him, and the mighty morning shone.

No word-mosaic artificer, he sang
A lofty song of lowly weal and dole.
Right from the heart, right to the heart it sprang,
Or from the soul leapt instant to the soul.

He felt the charm of childhood, grace of youth,
Grandeur of age, insisting to be sung.
The impassioned argument was simple truth
Half-wondering at its own melodious tongue.

Impassioned? ay, to the song's ecstatic core!
But far removed were clangour, storm and feud;
For plenteous health was his, exceeding store
Of joy, and an impassioned quietude.

IV.

A hundred years ere he to manhood came,
Song from celestial heights had wandered down,
Put off her robe of sunlight, dew and flame,
And donned a modish dress to charm the Town.

Thenceforth she but festooned the porch of things;
Apt at life's lore, incurious what life meant.
Dextrous of hand, she struck her lute's few strings,
Ignobly perfect, barrenly content.

Unflushed with ardour and unblanched with awe,
Her lips in profitless derision curled,
She saw with dull emotion — if she saw —
The vision of the glory of the world.

The human mask she watched, with dreamless eyes
In whose clear shallows lurked no trembling shade:
The stars, unkennd by her, might set and rise,
Unmarked by her, the daisies bloom and fade.

The age grew sated with her sterile wit.
Herself waxed weary on her loveless throne.
Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,
And craved a living voice, a natural tone.

For none the less, though song was but half true,
The world lay common, one abounding theme.
Man joyed and wept, and fate was ever new,
And love was sweet, life real, death no dream.

In sad stern verse the rugged scholar-sage
Bemoaned his toil unvalued, youth uncheered.
His numbers wore the vesture of the age,
But, 'neath it beating, the great heart was heard.

From dewy pastures, uplands sweet with thyme,
A virgin breeze freshened the jaded day.
It wafted Collins' lonely vesper-chime,
It breathed abroad the frugal note of Gray.

It fluttered here and there, nor swept in vain
The dusty haunts where futile echoes dwell,—
Then, in a cadence soft as summer rain,
And sad from Auburn voiceless, drooped and fell.

It drooped and fell, and one 'neath northern skies,
With southern heart, who tilled his father's field,
Found Poesy a-dying, bade her rise
And touch quick nature's hem and go forth healed.

On life's broad plain the ploughman's conquering share
Upturned the fallow lands of truth anew,
And o'er the formal garden's trim parterre
The peasant's team a ruthless furrow drew.

Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long
Whelmed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those
Twin morning stars of the new century's song,
Those morning stars that sang together, rose.

In elfish speech the *Dreamer* told his tale
Of marvellous oceans swept by fateful wings.—
The *Seer* strayed not from earth's human pale,
But the mysterious face of common things

He mirrored as the moon in Rydal Mere
Is mirrored, when the breathless night hangs blue:
Strangely remote she seems and wondrous near,
And by some nameless difference born anew.

Peace—peace—and rest ! Ah, how the lyre is loth,
 Or powerless now, to give what all men seek !
 Either it deadens with ignoble sloth
 Or deafens with shrill tumult, loudly weak.

Where is the singer whose large notes and clear
 Can heal and arm and plenish and sustain ?
 Lo, one with empty music floods the ear,
 And one, the heart refreshing, tires the brain.

And idly tuneful, the loquacious throng
 Flutter and twitter, prodigal of time,
 And little masters make a toy of song
 Till grave men weary of the sound of rhyme.

And some go pranked in faded antique dress,
 Abhorring to be hale and glad and free ;
 And some parade a conscious naturalness,
 The scholar's not the child's simplicity.

Enough ;—and wisest who from words forbear.
 The kindly river rails not as it glides ;
 And suave and charitable, the winning air
 Chides not at all, or only him who chides.

Nature! we storm thine ear with choric notes.

Thou answerest through the calm great nights and days,
 "Laud me who will: not tuneless are your throats;

Yet if ye paused I should not miss the praise."

We falter, half-rebuked, and sing again.

We chant thy desertness and haggard gloom,
 Or with thy splendid wrath inflate the strain,
 Or touch it with thy colour and perfume.

One, his melodious blood aflame for thee,

Woody with fierce lust, his hot heart world-defiled.

One, with the upward eye of infancy,

Looked in thy face, and felt himself thy child.

Thee he approached without distrust or dread—

Beheld thee throned, an awful queen, above—

Climbed to thy lap and merely laid his head
 Against thy warm wild heart of mother-love.

He heard that vast heart beating—thou didst press

Thy child so close, and lov'dst him unaware.

Thy beauty gladdened him; yet he scarce less

Had loved thee, had he never found thee fair!

For thou wast not as legendary lands
To which with curious eyes and ears we roam.
Nor wast thou as a fane mid solemn sands,
Where palmers halt at evening. Thou wast home.

And here, at home, still bides he ; but he sleeps ;
Not to be wakened even at thy word ;
Though we, vague dreamers, dream he somewhere keeps
An ear still open to thy voice still heard,—

Thy voice, as heretofore, about him blown,
For ever blown about his silence now ;
Thy voice, though deeper, yet so like his own
That almost, when he sang, we deemed 'twas thou !

Behind Helm Crag and Silver Howe the sheen
 Of the retreating day is less and less.
 Soon will the lordlier summits, here unseen,
 Gather the night about their nakedness.

The half-heard bleat of sheep comes from the hill.
 Faint sounds of childish play are in the air.
 The river murmurs past. All else is still.
 The very graves seem stiller than they were.

Afar though nation be on nation hurled,
 And life with toil and ancient pain depressed,
 Here one may scarce believe the whole wide world
 Is not at peace, and all man's heart at rest.

Rest ! 'twas the gift *he* gave ; and peace ! the shade
He spread, for spirits fevered with the sun.
 To him his bounties are come back—here laid
 In rest, in peace, his labour nobly done.

LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM.

(6TH OCTOBER 1892)

LOW, like another's, lies the laurelled head :
The life that seemed a perfect song is o'er :
Carry the last great bard to his last bed.
Land that he loved, thy noblest voice is mute.
Land that he loved, that loved him ! nevermore
Meadow of thine, smooth lawn or wild sea-shore,
Gardens of odorous bloom and tremulous fruit,
Or woodlands old, like Druid couches spread,
The master's feet shall tread.
Death's little rift hath rent the faultless lute :
The singer of undying songs is dead.

Lo, in this season pensive-hued and grave,
While fades and falls the doomed, reluctant leaf
From withered Earth's fantastic coronal,
With wandering sighs of forest and of wave
Mingles the murmur of a people's grief
For him whose leaf shall fade not, neither fall.
He hath fared forth, beyond these suns and showers.
For us, the autumn glow, the autumn flame,
And soon the winter silence shall be ours :
Him the eternal spring of fadeless fame
Crown with no mortal flowers.

Rapt though he be from us,
Virgil salutes him, and Theocritus ;
Catullus, mightiest-brained Lucretius, each
Greets him, their brother, on the Stygian beach ;
Proudly a gaunt right hand doth Dante reach ;
Milton and Wordsworth bid him welcome home ;
Bright Keats to touch his raiment doth beseech ;
Coleridge, his locks aspersed with fairy foam,
Calm Spenser, Chaucer suave,
His equal friendship crave :
And godlike spirits hail him guest, in speech
Of Athens, Florence, Weimar, Stratford, Rome.

What needs his laurel our ephemeral tears,
To save from visitation of decay ?
Not in this temporal sunlight, now, that bay
Blooms, nor to perishable mundane ears
Sings he with lips of transitory clay ;
For he hath joined the chorus of his peers
In habitations of the perfect day :
His earthly notes a heavenly audience hears,
And more melodious are henceforth the spheres,
Enriched with music stol'n from earth away.

He hath returned to regions whence he came.
Him doth the spirit divine
Of universal loveliness reclaim.
All nature is his shrine.
Seek him henceforward in the wind and sea,
In earth's and air's emotion or repose,
In every star's august serenity,
And in the rapture of the flaming rose.
There seek him if ye would not seek in vain,
There, in the rhythm and music of the Whole;
Yea, and for ever in the human soul
Made stronger and more beautiful by his strain.

For lo! creation's self is one great choir,
And what is nature's order but the rhyme
Whereto the worlds keep time,
And all things move with all things from their prime?
Who shall expound the mystery of the lyre?
In far retreats of elemental mind
Obscurely comes and goes
The imperative breath of song, that as the wind
Is trackless, and oblivious whence it blows.
Demand of lilies wherefore they are white,

Extort her crimson secret from the rose,
But ask not of the Muse that she disclose
The meaning of the riddle of her might :
Somewhat of all things sealed and recondite,
Save the enigma of herself, she knows.
The master could not tell, with all his lore,
Wherefore he sang, or whence the mandate sped :
Ev'n as the linnet sings, so I, he said ;—
Ah, rather as the imperial nightingale,
That held in trance the ancient attic shore,
And charms the ages with the notes that o'er
All woodland chants immortally prevail !
And now, from our vain plaudits greatly fled,
He with diviner silence dwells instead,
And on no earthly sea with transient roar,
Unto no earthly airs, he trims his sail,
But far beyond our vision and our hail
Is heard for ever and is seen no more.

No more, O never now,
Lord of the lofty and the tranquil brow
Whereon nor snows of time
Have fall'n, nor wintry rime,

Shall men behold thee, sage and mage sublime.
Once, in his youth obscure,
The maker of this verse, which shall endure
By splendour of its theme that cannot die,
Beheld thee eye to eye,
And touched through thee the hand
Of every hero of thy race divine,
Ev'n to the sire of all the laurelled line,
The sightless wanderer on the Ionian strand,
With soul as healthful as the poignant brine,
Wide as his skies and radiant as his seas,
Starry from haunts of his Familiars nine,
Glorious Mæonides.
Yea, I beheld thee, and behold thee yet :
Thou hast forgotten, but can I forget ?
The accents of thy pure and sovereign tongue,
Are they not ever goldenly impressed
On memory's palimpsest ?
I see the wizard locks like night that hung,
I tread the floor thy hallowing feet have trod ;
I see the hands a nation's lyre that strung,
The eyes that looked through life and gazed on God.

The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer ;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead ; the birds depart, the groves decay :
Empires dissolve and peoples disappear :
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerers leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign ;
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust :
The poet doth remain.
Dead is Augustus, Maro is alive ;
And thou, the Mantuan of our age and clime,
Like Virgil shalt thy race and tongue survive,
Bequeathing no less honeyed words to time,
Embalmed in amber of eternal rhyme,
And rich with sweets from every Muse's hive ;
While to the measure of the cosmic rune
For purer ears thou shalt thy lyre attune,
And heed no more the hum of idle praise
In that great calm our tumults cannot reach,
Master who crown'st our immelodious days
With flower of perfect speech.



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A Be Bi Belof

IT was the great good fortune of Mr. William Sharpe, poet and littérateur, to have heard Walter Pater read the essay we here reprint.¹ In some delightful recollections of his revered friend he permits us to become sharers of this high privilege.²

"He began to speak in a low voice about gold: the gold of nature; above all, the chemic action of golden light; and how it was "the primary colour of delight" throughout nature and in nearly all art.

"Later, when the lamp was lit, he read, at my request, the revised version of his then unpublished (in book form) essay, entitled *The School of Giorgione*: chosen because of the allusions in it to that very alchemy of gold light of which he had

1. This was before publication in book form. The Essay first appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* for October, 1877. It then underwent careful revision; was privately reprinted by Pater in 1878 at his own cost; and finally, ten years later, was included in the third edition of *The Renaissance* (1888.)

2. See *Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater* in *The Atlantic Monthly* for 'December, 1894.

spoken: "coloring, that weaving as of just perceptible gold threads of light through the dress, the flesh, the atmosphere, in Titian's *Lace-girl*,—the staining of the whole fabric of the thing with a new, delightful physical quality;" "the accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a moment on the wall or floor;" "this particular effect of light, this sudden inweaving of gold thread through the texture of the haystack, and the poplars, and the grass."

"When he read, Pater spoke in a low voice, rather hesitatingly at first, and sometimes almost constrainedly. Soon, however, he became absorbed; then his face would light up as with an inner glow, he would lean forward, and though his voice neither quickened nor intensified there was in it a new vibration. Occasionally, he would move his right hand slowly, with an undulating motion."

Than this no better foreword could be written.



FOR OCTOBER:

ESSAY ON THE NEWCOMES,

By

BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES.

THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE
BY
WALTER PATER.

FOR A VENETIAN PASTORAL.

BY GIORGIONE.

(In the Louvre.)

*Water, for anguish of the solstice : — nay,
‘But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
And bark how at its verge the wave sighs in
Reluctant. Hush! Beyond all depth away
The beat lies silent at the brink of day :
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be : —
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Life touching lips with Immortality.*

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE.

IT is the mistake of much popular criticism to regard poetry, music, and painting—all the various products of art—as but translations into different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought, supplemented by certain technical qualities of colour, in painting—of sound, in music—of rhythmical words, in poetry. In this way, the sensuous element in art, and with it almost everything in art that is essentially artistic, is made a matter of indifference; and a clear apprehension of the opposite principle—that the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase or quality of beauty, untranslatable into the forms of any other, an order of impressions distinct in kind—is the beginning of all true æsthetic criticism. * For, as art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the “imaginative reason” through the senses, there are differences of kind in æsthetic beauty, corresponding to the differences in kind of the gifts of sense themselves. Each art, therefore, having its own peculiar and incommunicable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibil-

ities to its material. One of the functions of æsthetic criticism is to define these limitations; to estimate the degree in which a given work of art fulfils its responsibilities to its special material; to note in a picture that true pictorial charm, which is neither a mere poetical thought nor sentiment, on the one hand, nor a mere result of communicable technical skill in colour or design, on the other; to define in a poem that true poetical quality, which is neither descriptive nor meditative merely, but comes of an inventive handling of rhythmical language—the element of song in the singing; to note in music the musical charm—that essential music, which presents no words, no matter of sentiment or thought, separable from the special form in which it is conveyed to us.

To such a philosophy of the variations of the beautiful, Lessing's analysis of the spheres of sculpture and poetry, in the *Laocoon*, was a very important contribution. But a true appreciation of these things is possible only in the light of a whole system of such art-casuistries. And it is in the criticism of painting that this truth most needs enforcing, for it is in popular judgments on pictures

that that false generalisation of all art into forms of poetry is most prevalent. To suppose that all is mere technical acquirement in delineation or touch, working through and addressing itself to the intelligence, on the one side, or a merely poetical, or what may be called literary interest, addressed also to the pure intelligence, on the other;—this is the way of most spectators, and of many critics, who have never caught sight, all the time, of that true pictorial quality which lies between (unique pledge of the possession of the pictorial gift) the inventive or creative handling of pure line and colour, which, as almost always in Dutch painting, as often also in the works of Titian or Veronese, is quite independent of anything definitely poetical in the subject it accompanies. It is the *drawing*—the design projected from that peculiar pictorial temperament or constitution, in which, while it may possibly be ignorant of true anatomical proportions, all things whatever, all poetry, every idea however abstract or obscure, floats up as a visible scene or image: it is the *colouring*—that weaving as of just perceptible gold threads of light through the dress, the flesh, the

atmosphere, in Titian's *Lace-girl*—the staining of the whole fabric of the thing with a new, delightful physical quality. This *drawing*, then—the arabesque traced in the air by Tintoret's flying figures, by Titian's forest branches; this colouring—the magic conditions of light and hue in the atmosphere of Titian's *Lace-girl* or Reuben's *Descent from the Cross*:—these essential pictorial qualities must first of all delight the sense, delight it as directly and sensuously as a fragment of Venetian glass; and through this delight only be the medium of whatever poetry or science may lie beyond them, in the intention of the composer. In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a moment, on the wall or floor: is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are caught in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself. And this primary and essential condition fulfilled, we may trace the coming of poetry into painting, by fine gradations upwards; from Japanese fan-painting, for instance, where

we get, first, only abstract colour; then, just a little interfused sense of the poetry of flowers; then, sometimes, perfect flower-painting; and so, onwards, until in Titian we have, as his poetry in the *Ariadne*, so actually a touch of true childlike humour in the diminutive, quaint figure with its silk gown, which ascends the temple stairs, in his picture of the *Presentation of the Virgin*, at Venice.

But although each art has thus its own specific order of impressions, and an untranslatable charm, while a just apprehension of the ultimate differences of the arts is the beginning of æsthetic criticism; yet it is noticeable that, in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term an *Anders-streben*—a partial alienation from its own limitations, by which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces.

Thus some of the most delightful music seems to be always approaching to figure, to pictorial definition. Architecture, again,

though it has its own laws—laws esoteric enough, as the true architect knows only too well—yet sometimes aims at fulfilling the conditions of a picture, as in the *Arena* chapel; or of sculpture, as in the flawless unity of Giotto's tower at Florence; and often finds a true poetry, as in those strangely twisted staircases of the *châteaux* of the country of the Loire, as if it were intended that among their odd turnings the actors in a wild life might pass each other unseen: there being a poetry also of memory and of the mere effect of time, by which it often profits greatly. Thus, again, sculpture aspires out of the hard limitation of pure form towards colour, or its equivalent; poetry also, in many ways, finding guidance from the other arts, the analogy between a Greek tragedy and a work of Greek sculpture, between a sonnet and a relief, of French poetry generally with the art of engraving, being more than mere figures of speech; and all the arts in common aspiring towards the principle of music; music being the typical, or ideally consummate art, the object of the great *Anders-streben* of all art, of all that is artistic, or partakes of artistic qualities.

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. For while in all other works of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it. That the mere matter of a poem, for instance—its subject, its given incidents or situation; that the mere matter of a picture—the actual circumstances of an event, the actual topography of a landscape—should be nothing without the form, the spirit, of the handling; that this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter:—this is what all art constantly strives after, and achieves in different degrees.

This abstract language becomes clear enough, if we think of actual examples. In an actual landscape we see a long white road, lost suddenly on the hill-verge. That is the matter of one of the etchings of M. Legros: only, in this etching, it is informed by an indwelling solemnity of expression, seen upon it or half-seen, within the limits of an exceptional moment, or caught from his own mood perhaps, but which he main-

tains as the very essence of the thing, throughout his work. Sometimes a momentary tint of stormy light may invest a homely or too familiar scene with a character which might well have been drawn from the deep places of the imagination. Then we might say that this particular effect of light, this sudden inweaving of gold thread through the texture of the haystack, and the poplars, and the grass, gives the scene artistic qualities; that it is like a picture. And such tricks of circumstance are commonest in landscape which has little salient character of its own; because, in such scenery, all the material details are so easily absorbed by that informing expression of passing light, and elevated, throughout their whole extent, to a new and delightful effect by it. And hence the superiority, for most conditions of the picturesque, of a river-side in France to a Swiss valley, because, on the French river-side, mere topography, the simple material, counts for so little, and, all being so pure, untouched, and tranquil in itself, mere light and shade have such easy work in modulating it to one dominant tone. The Venetian landscape, on the other hand, has in its material condi-

THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE

tions much which is hard, or harshly definite; but the masters of the Venetian school have shown themselves little burdened by them. Of its Alpine background they retain certain abstracted elements only, of cool colour and tranquillising line; and they use its actual details, the brown windy turrets, the straw-coloured fields, the forest arabesques, but as the notes of a music which duly accompanies the presence of their men and women, presenting us with the spirit or essence only of a certain sort of landscape—a country of the pure reason or half-imaginative memory.

Poetry, again, works with words addressed in the first instance to the mere intelligence; and it deals, most often, with a definite subject or situation. Sometimes it may find a noble and quite legitimate function in the expression of moral or political aspiration, as often in the poetry of Victor Hugo. In such instances it is easy enough for the understanding to distinguish between the matter and the form, however much the matter, the subject, the element which is addressed to the mere intelligence, has been penetrated by the informing, artistic spirit. But the ideal types of poetry are those

in which this distinction is reduced to its *minimum*; so that lyrical poetry, precisely because in it we are least able to detach the matter from the form, without a deduction of something from that matter itself, is, at least artistically, the highest and most complete form of poetry. And the very perfection of such poetry often seems to depend, in part, on a certain suppression or vagueness of mere subject, so that the meaning reaches us through ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding, as in some of the most imaginative compositions of William Blake, and often in Shakspeare's songs, as pre-eminently in that song of Mariana's page in *Measure for Measure*, in which the kindling force and poetry of the whole play seems to pass for a moment into an actual strain of music.

And this principle holds good of all things that partake in any degree of artistic qualities, of the furniture of our houses, and of dress, for instance, of life itself, of gesture and speech, and the details of daily intercourse; these also, for the wise, being susceptible of a suavity and charm, caught from the way in which they are done, which

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gives them a worth in themselves; wherein, indeed, lies what is valuable and justly attractive, in what is called the fashion of a time, which elevates the trivialities of speech, and manner, and dress, into "ends in themselves," and gives them a mysterious grace and attractiveness in the doing of them.

Art, then, is thus always striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material; the ideal examples of poetry and painting being those in which the constituent elements of the composition are so welded together, that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the "imaginative reason," that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol.

It is the art of music which most completely realises this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of form and matter. In its ideal, consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the

matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other; and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire. Music, then, and not poetry, as is so often supposed, is the true type or measure of perfected art. Therefore, although each art has its incommunicable element, its untranslatable order of impressions, its unique mode of reaching the "imaginative reason," yet the arts may be represented as continually struggling after the law or principle of music, to a condition which music alone completely realises; and one of the chief functions of æsthetic criticism, dealing with the products of art, new or old, is to estimate the degree in which each of those products approaches, in this sense, to musical law.

By no school of painters have the necessary limitations of the art of painting, been so unerringly though instinctively apprehended, and the essence of what is pictorial in a picture so justly conceived, as by the school of Venice; and the train of thought suggested in what has been now said is, perhaps, a not unfitting introduction to a few pages

THE SCHOOL OF GIORGIONE

about Giorgione, who, though much has been taken by recent criticism from what was reputed to be his work, yet, more entirely than any other painter, sums up, in what we know of himself and his art, the spirit of the Venetian school.

The beginnings of Venetian painting link themselves to the last, stiff, half-barbaric splendours of Byzantine decoration, and are but the introduction into the crust of marble and gold on the walls of the *Duomo* of Murano, or of Saint Mark's, of a little more of human expression. And throughout the course of its later development, always subordinate to architectural effect, the work of the Venetian school never escaped from the influence of its beginnings. Unassisted, and therefore unperplexed, by naturalism, religious mysticism, philosophical theories, it had no Giotto, no Angelico, no Botticelli. Exempt from the stress of thought and sentiment, which taxed so severely the resources of the generations of Florentine artists, those earlier Venetian painters, down to Carpaccio and the Bellini, seem never for a moment to have been tempted even to lose sight of the scope of their art in its strictness, or to forget that

painting must be before all things decorative, a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall, only more dexterously blent than the marking of its precious stone or the chance interchange of sun and shade upon it—this, to begin and end with—whatever higher matter of thought, or poetry, or religious reverie might play its part therein, between. At last, with final mastery of all the technical secrets of his art, and with somewhat more than “a spark of the divine fire” to his share, comes Giorgione. He is the inventor of *genre*, of those easily movable pictures which serve neither for uses of devotion, nor of allegorical or historic teaching—little groups of real men and women, amid congruous furniture or landscape—morsels of actual life, conversation or music or play, refined upon or idealised, till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar. Those spaces of more cunningly blent colour, obediently filling their places, hitherto, in a mere architectural scheme, Giorgione detaches from the wall; he frames them by the hands of some skilful carver, so that people may move them readily and take with them where they go, like a poem in manuscript, or a musical

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instrument, to be used, at will, as a means of self-education, stimulus or solace, coming like an animated presence, into one's cabinet, to enrich the air as with some choice aroma, and, like persons, live with us, for a day or a lifetime. Of all art like this, art which has played so large a part in men's culture since that time, Giorgione is the initiator. Yet in him too that old Venetian clearness or justice, in the apprehension of the essential limitations of the pictorial art, is still undisturbed; and, while he interfuses his painted work with a high-strung sort of poetry, caught directly from a singularly rich and high-strung sort of life, yet in his selection of subject, or phase of subject, in the subordination of mere subject to pictorial design, to the main purpose of a picture, he is typical of that aspiration of all the arts towards music, which I have endeavoured to explain,—towards the perfect identification of matter and form.

Born so near to Titian, though a little before him, that these two companion pupils of the aged Giovanni Bellini may almost be called contemporaries, Giorgione stands to Titian in something like the relationship of Sordello to Dante, in Mr. Browning's poem.

Titian, when he leaves Bellini, becomes, in turn, the pupil of Giorgione; he lives in constant labour more than sixty years after Giorgione is in his grave; and with such fruit, that hardly one of the greater towns of Europe is without some fragment of it. But the slightly older man, with his so limited actual product (what remains to us of it seeming, when narrowly examined, to reduce itself to almost one picture, like Sordello's one fragment of lovely verse), yet expresses, in elementary motive and principle, that spirit—itself the final acquisition of all the long endeavours of Venetian art—which Titian spreads over his whole life's activity.

And, as we might expect, something fabulous and illusive has always mingled itself in the brilliancy of Giorgione's fame. The exact relationship to him of many works—drawings, portraits, painted idylls—often fascinating enough, which in various collections went by his name, was from the first uncertain. Still, six or eight famous pictures at Dresden, Florence and the Louvre, were undoubtedly attributed to him, and in these, if anywhere, something of the splendour of the old Venetian humanity seemed to have

been preserved. But of those six or eight famous pictures it is now known that only one is certainly from Giorgione's hand. The accomplished science of the subject has come at last, and, as in other instances, has not made the past more real for us, but assured us that we possess of it less than we seemed to possess. Much of the work on which Giorgione's immediate fame depended, work done for instantaneous effect, in all probability passed away almost within his own age, like the frescoes on the façade of the *fondaco dei Tedeschi* at Venice, some crimson traces of which, however, still give a strange additional touch of splendour to the scene of the *Rialto*. And then there is a barrier or border land, a period about the middle of the sixteenth century, in passing through which the tradition miscarries, and the true outlines of Giorgione's work and person become obscured. It became fashionable for wealthy lovers of art, with no critical standard of authenticity, to collect so-called works of Giorgione, and a multitude of imitations came into circulation. And now, in the "new Vasari,"¹ the great traditional reputa-

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle: *History of Painting in North Italy*.

tion, woven with so profuse demand on men's admiration, has been scrutinised thread by thread; and what remains of the most vivid and stimulating of Venetian masters, a live flame, as it seemed, in those old shadowy times, has been reduced almost to a name by his most recent critics.

Yet enough remains to explain why the legend grew up, above the name, why the name attached itself, in many instances, to the bravest work of other men. The *Concert* in the *Pitti* Palace, in which a monk, with cowl and tonsure, touches the keys of a harpsichord, while a clerk, placed behind him, grasps the handle of a viol, and a third, with cap and plume, seems to wait upon the true interval for beginning to sing, is undoubtedly Giorgione's. The outline of the lifted finger, the trace of the plume, the very threads of the fine linen, which fasten themselves on the memory, in the moment before they are lost altogether in that calm unearthly glow, the skill which has caught the waves of wandering sound, and fixed them for ever on the lips and hands—these are indeed the master's own; and the criticism which, while dismissing so much hitherto believed to be

Giorgione's, has established the claims of this one picture, has left it among the most precious things in the world of art.

It is noticeable that the "distinction" of this *Concert*, its sustained evenness of perfection, alike in design, in execution, and in choice of personal type, becomes for the "new Vasari" the standard of Giorgione's genuine work. Finding here enough to explain his influence, and the true seal of mastery, its authors assign to Pellegrino da San Daniele the *Holy Family* in the Louvre, for certain points in which it comes short of that standard, but which will hardly diminish the spectator's enjoyment of a singular charm of liquid air, with which the whole picture seems instinct, filling the eyes and lips, the very garments, of its sacred personages, with some wind-searched brightness and energy; of which fine air the blue peak, clearly defined in the distance, is as it were, the visible pledge. Similarly, another favourite picture in the Louvre, the subject of a sonnet by a poet whose own painted work often comes to mind as one ponders over these precious things—the *Fête Champêtre*, is assigned to an imitator of Sebastian del Piombo; and the

Tempest, in the Academy at Venice (a slighter loss, perhaps, though not without its pleasant effect of clearing weather, towards the left, its one untouched morsel), to Paris Bordone, or perhaps to "some advanced craftsman of the sixteenth century." From the gallery at Dresden, the *Knight embracing a Lady*, where the knight's broken gauntlets seem to mark some well known pause in a story we would willingly hear the rest of, is conceded to "a Brescian hand," and *Jacob meeting Rachel* to a pupil of Palma; and, whatever their charm, we are called on to give up the *Ordeal*, and the *Finding of Moses* with its jewel-like pools of water, perhaps to Bellini.

Nor has the criticism, which thus so freely diminishes the number of his authentic works, added anything important to the well-known outline of the life and personality of the man: only, it has fixed one or two dates, one or two circumstances, a little more exactly. Giorgione was born before the year 1477, and spent his childhood at Castelfranco, where the last crags of the Venetian Alps break down romantically, with something of parklike grace, to the plain. A natural child of the family of the Barbarelli by a peasant-

girl of Vedelago, he finds his way early into the circle of notable persons—people of courtesy; and becomes initiated into those differences of personal type, manner, and even of dress, which are best understood there—that “distinction” of the *Concert* of the *Pitti* Palace. Not far from his home lives Catherine of Cornara, formerly Queen of Cyprus; and, up in the towers which still remain, Tuzio Costanzo, the famous *condottière*—a picturesque remnant of medieval manners, amid a civilisation rapidly changing. Giorgione paints their portraits; and when Tuzio’s son, Matteo, dies in early youth, adorns in his memory a chapel in the church of Castelfranco, painting on this occasion, perhaps, the altar-piece, foremost among his authentic works, still to be seen there, with the figure of the warrior-saint, Liberale, of which the original little study in oil, with the delicately gleaming, silver-grey armour, is one of the greater treasures of the National Gallery, and in which, as in some other knightly personages attributed to him, people have supposed the likeness of his own presumably gracious presence. Thither, at last, he is himself brought home from Venice,

early dead, but celebrated. It happened, about his thirty-fourth year, that in one of those parties at which he entertained his friends with music, he met a certain lady of whom he became greatly enamoured, and "they rejoiced greatly," says Vasari, "the one and the other, in their loves." And two quite different legends concerning it agree in this, that it was through this lady he came by his death: Ridolfi relating that, being robbed of her by one of his pupils, he died of grief at the double treason;—Vasari, that she being secretly stricken of the plague, and he making his visits to her as usual, he took the sickness from her mortally, along with her kisses, and so briefly departed.

But, although the number of Giorgione's extant works has been thus limited by recent criticism, all is not done when the real and the traditional elements in what concerns him have been discriminated; for, in what is connected with a great name, much that is not real is often very stimulating; and, for the æsthetic philosopher, over and above the real Giorgione and his authentic extant works, there remains the *Giorgionesque* also—an influence, a spirit or type in art, active in

men so different as those to whom many of his supposed works are really assignable—a veritable school, which grew together out of all those fascinating works rightly or wrongly attributed to him; out of many copies from, or variations on him, by unknown or uncertain workmen, whose drawings and designs were, for various reasons, prized as his; out of the immediate impression he made upon his contemporaries, and with which he continued in men's minds; out of many traditions of subject and treatment, which really descend from him to our own time, and by retracing which we fill out the original image; Giorgione thus becoming a sort of impersonation of Venice itself, its projected reflex or ideal, all that was intense or desirable in it thus crystallising about the memory of this wonderful young man.

And now, finally, let me illustrate some of the characteristics of this *School of Giorgione*, as we may call it, which, for most of us, notwithstanding all that negative criticism of the "new Vasari," will still identify itself with those famous pictures at Florence, Dresden and Paris; and in which a certain artistic ideal is defined for us—the conception of a

peculiar aim and procedure in art, which we may understand as the *Giorgionesque*, wherever we find it, whether in Venetian work generally, or in work of our own time—and of which the *Concert*, that undoubted work of Giorgione in the *Pitti* Palace, is the typical instance, and a pledge authenticating the connexion of the school with the master.

I have spoken of a certain interpenetration of the matter or subject of a work of art with the form of it, a condition realised absolutely only in music, as the condition to which every form of art is perpetually aspiring. In the art of painting, the attainment of this ideal condition, this perfect interpenetration of the subject with colour and design, depends, of course, in great measure, on dexterous choice of that subject, or phase of subject; and such choice is one of the secrets of Giorgione's school. It is the school of *genre*, and employs itself mainly with "painted idylls," but, in the production of this pictorial poetry, exercises a wonderful tact in the selecting of such matter as lends itself most readily and entirely to pictorial form, to complete expression by drawing and colour. For although its productions are

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painted poems, they belong to a sort of poetry which tells itself without an articulated story. The master is pre-eminent for the resolution, the ease and quickness, with which he reproduces instantaneous motion—the lacing-on of armour, with the head bent back so stately—the fainting lady—the embrace, rapid as the kiss caught, with death itself, from dying lips—the momentary conjunction of mirrors and polished armour and still water, by which all the sides of a solid image are presented at once, solving that casuistical question whether painting can present an object as completely as sculpture. The sudden act, the rapid transition of thought, the passing expression—this, he arrests with that vivacity which Vasari has attributed to him *il fuoco Giorgionesco*, as he terms it. Now it is part of the ideality of the highest sort of dramatic poetry, that it presents us with a kind of profoundly significant and animated instants, a mere gesture, a look, a smile, perhaps—some brief and wholly concrete moment—into which, however, all the motives, all the interests and effects of a long history, have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb past and future in an

intense consciousness of the present. Such ideal instants the school of Giorgione selects, with its admirable tact, from that feverish, tumultuously coloured life of the old citizens of Venice—exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fulness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life.

It is to the law or condition of music, as I said, that all art like this is really aspiring; and, in the school of Giorgione, the perfect moments of music itself, the making or hearing of music, song or its accompaniment, are themselves prominent as subjects. On that background of the silence of Venice, which the visitor there finds so impressive, the world of Italian music was then forming. In choice of subject, as in all besides, the *Concert* of the *Pitti* Palace is typical of all that Giorgione, himself an admirable musician, touched with his influence; and in sketch or finished picture, in various collections, we may follow it through many intricate variations—men fainting at music, music heard at the pool-side while people fish, or mingled with the sound of the pitcher in the well, or

heard across running water, or among the flocks; the tuning of instruments—people with intent faces, as if listening, like those described by Plato in an ingenious passage, to detect the smallest interval of musical sound, the smallest undulation in the air, or feeling for music in thought on a stringless instrument, ear and finger refining themselves infinitely, in the appetite for sweet sound—a momentary touch of an instrument in the twilight, as one passes through some unfamiliar room, in a chance company.

In such favourite incidents, then, of Giorgione's school, music or music-like intervals in our existence, life itself is conceived as a sort of listening—listening to music, to the reading of Bandello's novels, to the sound of water, to time as it flies. Often such moments are really our moments of play, and we are surprised at the unexpected blessedness of what may seem our least important part of time; not merely because play is in many instances that to which people really apply their own best powers, but also because at such times, the stress of our servile, every-day attentiveness being relaxed, the happier powers in things without

us are permitted free passage, and have their way with us. And so, from music, the school of Giorgione passes often to the play which is like music; to those masques in which men avowedly do but play at real life, like children "dressing-up," disguised in the strange old Italian dresses, parti-coloured, or fantastic with embroidery and furs, of which the master was so curious a designer, and which, above all the spotless white linen at wrist and throat, he painted so dexterously.

And when people are happy in this thirsty land water will not be far off; and in the school of Giorgione, the presence of water—the well, or marble-rimmed pool, the drawing or pouring of water, as the woman pours it from a pitcher with her jewelled hand in the *Fête Champêtre*, listening, perhaps, to the cool sound as it falls, blent with the music of the pipes—is as characteristic, and almost as suggestive, as that of music itself. And the landscape feels, and is glad of it also—a landscape full of clearness, of the effects of water, of fresh rain newly passed through the air, and collected into the grassy channels; the air, too, in the school of Giorgione, seeming as vivid as the people who breathe it, and

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literally empyrean, all impurities being burnt out of it, and no taint, no floating particle of anything but its own proper elements allowed to subsist within it.

Its scenery is such as in England we call "park scenery," with some elusive refinement felt about the rustic buildings, the choice grass, the grouped trees, the undulations deftly economised for graceful effect. Only, in Italy all natural things are, as it were, woven through and through with gold thread, even the cypress revealing it among the folds of its blackness. And it is with gold dust, or gold thread, that these Venetian painters seem to work, spinning its fine filaments, through the solemn human flesh, away into the white plastered walls of the thatched huts. The harsher details of the mountains recede to a harmonious distance, the one peak of rich blue above the horizon remaining but as the visible warrant of that due coolness which is all we need ask here of the Alps, with their dark rains and streams. Yet what real, airy space, as the eye passes from level to level, through the long-drawn valley in which Jacob embraces Rachel among the flocks! Nowhere is there a truer instance

of that balance, that modulated unison of landscape and persons—of the human image and its accessories—already noticed as characteristic of the Venetian school, so that, in it, neither personage nor scenery is ever a mere pretext for the other.

Something like this seems to me to be the *vraie vérité* about Giorgione, if I may adopt a serviceable expression, by which the French recognise those more liberal and durable impressions which, in respect of any really considerable person or subject, anything that has at all intricately occupied men's attention, lie beyond, and must supplement, the narrower range of the strictly ascertained facts about it. In this, Giorgione is but an illustration of a valuable general caution we may abide by in all criticism. As regards Giorgione himself, we have indeed to take note of all those negations and exceptions, by which, at first sight, a "new Vasari" seems merely to have confused our apprehension of a delightful object, to have explained away out of our inheritance from past time what seemed of high value there. Yet it is not with a full understanding even of those exceptions that one can leave off

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just at this point. Properly qualified, such exceptions are but a salt of genuineness in our knowledge; and beyond all those strictly ascertained facts, we must take note of that indirect influence by which one like Giorgione, for instance, enlarges his permanent efficacy and really makes himself felt in our culture. In a just impression of that, is the essential truth, the *vraie vérité* concerning him.

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1. "In that exceedingly rare periodical, The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine of 1856 (twelve parts only were issued), there are two papers mainly on Thackeray, in the January and June numbers. These (and, as I was told by Rossetti, also the interesting article on Ruskin's third volume of Modern Painters) were written by Edward Burne-Jones." Thus Mr. William Sharp in The Atlantic Monthly, September, 1898. In The Books of William Morris by Mr. H. B. Forman (London, 1897), the second essay is ascribed to Bernard Cracroft, and three tales not mentioned by Mr. Sharp, are attributed to Burne-Jones.

2. Issued in this country by Harpers. But are we to have the wood cuts which so greatly delighted Burne-Jones?

been peculiarly acceptable to him. Here, Holman Hunt's exquisite etching in the initial number of The Germ, first found adequate appreciation. You may call it log-rolling if you will,—but was it not god-like in its fine careless rapture?

Of all that glorious band of youths how few survive! Think of the illustrious dead who made up that shining Brotherhood,—who one by one have gone unattended but unafraid, into the unknown dark.

Of Thackeray might it not be asked: with what manner of speech may we salute the Master of perfect speech? Do not these words of Dr. T. W. Parsons say 'all that can be said'?—

*"And so "Hic jacet"—that is all
That can be writ or said or sung
Of him who held in such a thrall
With his melodious gift of pen and tongue
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By

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES.

“YOUR thoughts come in, like the intervention of the Greek Chorus, as an ornament and a source of fresh delight. Like the songs of the Chorus, they bid us pause a moment over the wider laws and actions of human fate and human life, and we turn from your persons to yourself, and again from yourself to your persons, as from the odes of Sophocles or Aristophanes to the action of their characters on the stage. Nor, to my taste, does the mere music and melancholy dignity of your style in these passages of meditation fall far below the highest efforts of poetry. I remember that scene where Clive, at Barnes Newcome's lecture on the Poetry of the Affections, sees Ethel who is lost to him. “And the past and its dear histories, and youth and its hopes and passions, and tones and looks for ever echoing in the heart and present in the memory—these, no doubt, poor Clive saw and heard as he looked across the great gulf of time, and parting and grief, and beheld the woman he had loved for many years.

“For ever echoing in the heart and present in the memory: who has not heard these tones, who does not hear them as he turns over your books that, for so many years, have been his companions and comforters? We have been young and old, we have been sad and merry with you, we have listened to the midnight chimes with Pen and Warrington, have stood with you beside the deathbed, have mourned at that yet more awful funeral of lost love, and with you have prayed in the inmost chapel sacred to our old and immortal affections, *à léal souvenir!* And whenever you speak for yourself, and speak in earnest, how magical, how rare, how lonely in our literature is the beauty of your sentences!”

ANDREW LANG,
(*Letters to Dead Authors.*)

ESSAY ON THE NEWCOMES.

THIS last and greatest work of Mr. Thackeray has been completed now some six months, and, in the meantime, has been subjected to both public and private criticism with, I believe, one unvarying judgment of commendation, that he has indeed performed his labour excellently, and done a good work for society in giving us this story of our manner of life so faithfully and tenderly. One looks now, at last, for an escape from that old imputed charge of bitterness and wayward choosing of the evil only in his delineation of life; it was fast becoming meaningless from its very frequency, and I fear also an occasion sometimes for the most pitiful twaddle and conversational hypocrisy. Alas, those brilliant formulas in which we sometimes fold our criticisms and condemnations, and suffer them to pass from mouth to mouth, without question or gainsay, how are they not the cause of infinite injustice to others, and to ourselves of loss irreparable? It is but a little time ago that the name of Thackeray seemed an accepted text *in perpetuum* for gravest homilies upon evil speaking, satire, and slander; and, as if

to counteract any latent consciousness of truth, that would be present sometimes, there would follow much self-complacency and congratulation upon our many social virtues and national character; for it is observable that men who will volunteer the most abject confessions of their own shortcomings,—and if self-depreciation were only humility, would afford an example of grace, edifying to all Christendom,—yet do nevertheless betray a strange impatience if their confessions are believed by others and accepted against them; do become, after a marvellous fashion, indignant when their Church confessions of unworthiness are granted by their neighbours as not improbable. Yet, verily, if this our daily humiliation, is not the veriest hypocrisy and climax of our iniquity; if we are not altogether committed to a sham worship, how comes this inconsistency of ours, that we reject our own testimony against ourselves in the mouth of a brother; that we do perseveringly seek to turn into a charge of spleen and sneering against a writer his faithful picturing of an evil we cannot deny, and a life of broken promises we are ever con-

fessing. It is time now to have done with this silly, because untrue assertion that Thackeray gives only the evil that he sees, and gives that bitterly, for now at least he has vindicated for himself a name of truthfulness and widest sympathy unsurpassable; and it is time also for the critic altogether to take up a new position, descend from his seat of judgment to one of testimony; for, although it be well for him at the first appearance of a teacher among men, to prove and examine the spirit from whence it is, administering counsel, and at times correction, blaming gently and not unwisely, remembering that so God has tempered our hearts and intellects together, that wheresoever we render praise it will never be wholly undeserved, but in our condemnation it may be we were ourselves wanting in knowledge and comprehending sympathy. I say, though it is good for the critic to take his allotted place then, to try every beginning and prove it; yet, when once this is done, and a great creative spirit has become manifest from the trial, then our place also is with the many that look on and listen, our duty to proclaim its

honour, rejoice in its light unselfishly; so only may we hope to understand its teaching, and the symbol of understanding in neither the unbridled tongue nor the supercilious lip, nor the mocking jest, but the hand closed upon the mouth.

Finding, therefore, in this story a wonderfully faithful picture of the great world as it passes daily before us, many-sided, deeply intricate; finding so much mystery of our manifold human life unfolded, and the veil of its complexity drawn aside, not without deepest awe and veneration; how should we do other than listen reverently, and be thankful for the gift, and speak unlimited praise of it, heeding neither charge of extravagance, nor custom of detraction.

Regarding then, this masterpiece of all novel writing, in which is fulfilled, not indeed for the first time, but to an hitherto unreached limit, all that one looked to see this literature set before it for an aim, one is impelled, by associations connected with its very completeness to a retrospect of the first beginnings of fiction, and the need that gave occasion to its birth full half a century ago. For it was then, while as our fathers

were sorely troubled and perplexed with the problem of this strange universe, that by a mighty reaction this new literature came into being. Sorely tried were they, even as we are sometimes to this very day, only more sadly, hopelessly, for they were now jaded and weary, and sick to death of unbelief and doubtings of their unbelief, and questionings, if at length, at any time, "the riddle of the painful earth" would solve itself; suffering greatly in a fire of tribulation more than we, their children, have ever seen, revolutions and rebellions, and the overthrow of ancient ways and uprooting of many dead forms, out of which life and vitality had departed long ago; till, from universal gloom and darkness of the understanding there grew up hardness of heart and isolation, selfish and untender. Therefore, they began to look for comfort and tranquility elsewhere than in the outward relations of the world, to find in fiction and recital of imagined griefs a sympathy they vainly sought for, and alas! had altogether ceased to find in reality; and it was a good and happy change,—spite of its sickly and distempered form, a happy change,—

when men believing nothing else, yet believed they felt, knew they were unhappy, began to speak about their feelings, and speaking, to believe and trust them: yes, with all its melancholy sentiment and outward misanthropy, it was a very happy thing for men when they thus began to confide their sorrows to each other. Be sure the evil is already past, and the grief nigh being overcome, when we speak of our sorrows and aspirations one to another.

The world of half a century back was filled with Werthers, speechless, voiceless, suffering in mute agony until Goëthe came, a heaven-sent interpreter, who set their discordant voices to a tune, and fashioned their murmurings into articulate speech; the fame of that first utterance of his shall testify how truly he had comprehended, and spoken for them; and from that time to this, through truthful yearnings and desire for sympathy, through fashion, which is the curse of all things good; through dilettantism, the latest born of an evil brood in an evil time; through puerilities, senilities, imbecilities, there has not ceased one perpetual flow of novels and romances to that

degree that one would think all conceivable combinations of plot and counterplot had been exhausted at length; and yet they go on multiplying, representing nearly half the literature of the people, and all the literature of many, till in this year of grace where can we limit their remote influences, where define their subtle working upon our personal, that is, our real education; for good or evil, directly or indirectly, they share in the education of all, they form all the experience of many: however fashioned at the first, through whatever silly transformations they have gone, at one time food only for listless dreamers and idlers in the great vineyard, at another sent into the desert like scapegoats, laden with the follies and pitiful absurdities of divided Christendom, they have attained such imperial dominion as well behoves us neither to overlook nor hastily condemn, present definite claims to be listened to now, that are somewhat grown of late, forcing us to the conclusion that leisure hours, as they are charitably named, are no unaccountable atoms of a life, that the mind at least will abide no vacuity, will and must be filled with something, be it of

good or evil, must be planted and watered, or suffered to lie waste and breed impurity. Therefore it is above all things needful that those who have the charge of watching the process of the times should keep especial guard upon this, that literature of fiction, since it is imperatively demanded, should at least fulfil as noble a destiny as it is capable of: that, as it needed a great man to bring it forth, it should never be without great men to cherish and support it; that especially the young, whose happy fancy and imagination cannot always be crushed into silence, will sometimes rebel for lack of food, and go seeking it themselves, should run no danger of gathering poison with their fruit.

Now I well know that novels, and what is ignorantly called "light reading," find little favour with many as an acknowledged element in education, that parents and tutors are especially jealous of its influence, cannot be brought to look upon it as not altogether evil, cannot believe that a genius, a great man, a hero in the highest sense, is to be found in its whole history; and perhaps this is not altogether to be blamed or wondered

at: seeing what this fiction has hitherto been, in so many instances, it would indeed be strange if any good could come of it. Looking back upon a whole dreary waste of barren, false idealism, I cannot help thinking it called loudly for the doom pronounced upon it by Carlyle, in memorable words: "Day after day, looking at the high destinies which yet await literature, which literature will ere long address herself with more decisiveness than ever to fulfil, it grows clearer to us that the proper task of literature lies in the domain of belief, within which poetic fiction, as it is characteristically named, will have to take a quite new figure if allowed a settlement there. Whereby were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel writers, and such like, must in a new generation gradually do one of two things, either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semifatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them, with such faculty as they have, to understand and record what is true, of which surely there is, and for ever will be,

a whole infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us. Poetry will more and more come to be understood as nothing but higher knowledge, and the only genuine romance for grown persons Reality." Yes verily,—

"God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is his Song."

And indeed it was high time to waken to a comprehension of this truth, to leave off forever dreaming, as if life were a lengthened summer afternoon, and we were meant to cease altogether at its expiring. Oh! life and reality, shall we ever know them as they are? Here at least not wholly, their dark wisdom is far withdrawn from us at the feet of God; but something surely, either by symbol or the darkness of similitude, is yet possible, something whereby we may discern the dream within the dream, and choose the true: thus much may we surely take for granted, that this life of ours is not altogether *yesterday* nor yet *to-morrow*, but is chiefly and above all a continual *to-day*, whose true expression is present action, present virtue; and this primary fact, this, the

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essence of what is signified by life, we have strangely forgotten at times, been strangely unfaithful to our post in these "foremost files of time," looking backwards, looking onwards for some golden year, with a world neglected at our feet, forgetting—

"That unto him who works and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

Too much life has perished surely on this road to Eldorado; too much precious breath in sighing after days that never come again, in aspirations after others that may never come; it was time to ask—

"When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?"

But now, at last, to all who understand the signals of the future, there is audible upon the winds a gathering cry for life, "more life and fuller;" a great awakening from evil dreams and long deathful slumbers in sepulchres, of things past; a reprieve at length from vigils for a dawn that will not come, a general ascending from the valley of dry bones into the upper air, in a new

world, which is the old still, among other faces happy with real laughter, sanctified with real sorrow, beautiful with the crimson flow of life—contemplating which, and all the widening, deepening sympathy and brotherhood involved in it, like a new land to some Columbus, I cannot but feel hopefully, speak hopefully for the present and the coming years and their hidden destiny; cannot, above all, but speak thankfully and with deepest reverence for such great names as Tennyson and Holman Hunt, Ruskin and Carlyle, and Kingsley, and many others who have led on this most godly crusade against falsehood, doubt, and wretched fashion, against hypocrisy and mammon, and lack of earnestness, and among them—according to his rare and excellent gift—Thackeray, whom I shall not hesitate to call great and among the greatest. Those who will refuse the title from mere questioning, whether novel writing really affords scope for greatness, can know little of the requisites for its construction, little of the keen, piercing analysis, the long observance, and the sympathy which are needed for its perfection; and upon this subject of great-

ness a thought occurs to me which may be best developed here.

When we think upon heroic men, conquerors, prophets, poets, painters, musicians, it is for the most part in the *light of difference*, as being specially conquerors, prophets, or any other, that we dwell upon them, seldom if ever in the *light of unity*, as being all of them comprehended under the one idea of *greatness*; and herein I believe we are unconscious of a certain oversight and imperfectness of conception; for it seems that the foundation and root of difference lies not so much in the kind or quality of their genius as in the form of it—the mode or manner in which it shall be manifested; that like as one same Spirit informs the diverse personalities of men, so also does one same stream of inspiration, visible in no two souls alike, inhabit the great amongst us; which mode and manner of their appearance are governed and fashioned by the wants of the age in which they live, the spaciousness or narrowness of the circle in which they revolve, and the great idea in their time growing into fact among men: from which it would follow, that in so far

as any genius nears to perfection in its finite and particular development, so far might we justly reason that it nears to universality, so that if such and such things were not to happen and such again to intervene, it would not be lost nor darkened but assume a new form; that the accident of prophet, poet, warrior, would change and interchange, but the substratum of greatness, the idea, the essence and efficient cause of all, would not change but be abiding. I would not be understood to speak without limitation, as not regarding the evident appointments of nature; it is the misfortune of advocating a neglected or forgotten side of any question, that one is chargeable with an implied denial of any other point of view—the gifts and appointments of nature shall go very far, but accident of time and place even farther to the making of a man. We have seen at once in the world's history the most surpassing faculties of many centred in one. Have there not gone before us Æschylus and Leonardo, Dante and Michael Angelo and Raffaele: there have not been wanting poets whose songs were battles and heroic

actions, and their life a mighty epic like St. Louis, and warriors whose battles were sharpworded words, who sang the pæan of their own victory over the Dragon, and their own death-song that followed close after like that lean Dante—and Shakespeare also with his great human heart and world-wide sympathy, he the most human among men, the very crown of humanity, can we think at all what he had been in other far different times to those wherein he lived: a conqueror and leader of armies, discoverer of new worlds, I think, in the old heroic days when the land lay all unknown before him and unpeopled; or a prophet in the childhood of a growing nation, when somehow the heaven seemed nearer, and voices from its deep infinity were not heard so faintly nor far between: or a Socrates when men were first mazed at the juggles of the brain and lost in more than Cretan labyrinth; or a builder of churches in the after-time, a carver of the human countenance in its hitherto untold mystery, out of the hewn rock and the quarry, even as in his own generation he sang the round of human love and action and passion. Holding it

then inseparable to the idea of genius that it be thus plastic, shapeable into any form, fit for all uses, embracing all height and depth; and of great men in like manner as having their work ever within the innermost circle of their age; comprehending, interpreting, supporting, advancing it,—central men among their contemporaries; and seeing, moreover, that the channels through which any such might hope to reach the heart and pulsation of living men and work most effectually upon them, lie especially through the domain of this new literature, one would, I think, naturally look in this direction for the manifestation of genius, and so looking would, I doubt not, find it, in more representatives than one, and in Thackeray, very near a consummation.

What a change it is to be brought face to face with human character, to bid farewell, as we surely shall now do, to idealities, to be cheated no longer with far-off abstractions. I protest that in the Waverly Novels and whole historical romance school that followed them, one looks in vain for anything to sympathize with; one cannot love these attributes, “icily regular, splendidly

null," that are invested with a temporary personality; this is not character—to sum up human life by epithet on epithet, after the fashion of our history-writers, is but to dwell upon the very surface of things, and remain there, catalogue-making, after all. We, my brothers, are not sheaves of well-assorted attributes, but inconsistent half-formed wills not to be so measured nor described: sometimes brave, I think, we all are, sometimes cowardly too, generous and illiberal, merciful and tyrannous, by turn and turn about in the self-same day, and we have no brotherhood with these embodied attributes, we desire a biographer for our own poor mazed life, one who shall hold up a mirror to ourselves, mingling the sweet and bitter, the light and darkness, as they are most truly mingled in life.

Strange that the world has grown so old maturing systems of religion and philosophy that have not taught us wisdom: it seems we are yet at the beginning of years; what know we of our nearest neighbour? appearance only and outward seeming, nothing more; we have known him, it may be two-score years, have seen him always calm,

grave, and business-like, the last man in all the world to be accused of sentiment, and romance; and his likeness hanging there, the very image of his hard unmoved face, we call successful, a happy effort of the painter: yet, it may be, the curtain and the pillar and the cushioned chair are as much belonging to him as that cold face. The painter saw him not, nor we either, as he looked once, for a single moment it may be, when his divinity was revealed through clouds and darkness, in passionate working of his features at an outrage offered, or a love flung back unrequited, or a friend turned false to him. Behold we know nothing of him for ever; that hour revealed him in silence, henceforward he is locked up and sealed against a time to come.

I shall abstain altogether from quotation or digest of the history in *The Newcomes*, both from want of space, and chiefly because of the unsatisfactory nature of such custom: for the many who have read the book, what has been or shall be said of it, will find at least ready understanding, if not assent; for those who have not such quotations, however selected and voluminous, would convey little

idea of my meaning; for those again who read reviews only for the sake of their quotations, (and there are confessedly many such,) I shall warn at once; and for those still more unfortunate knowledge hunters who are satisfied to claim acquaintance with an author through his reviewers and such selections as they may of their bounty give, I extend the same warning—that they must seek elsewhere: even as it is I shall be unable to do more than merely point out the chief moral design of the book, as it seems to me, and even this cursorily; leaving all collateral and minor aims which are manifest throughout, to the reader's own suggestions.

And first of the central purpose of the book for which I imagine it was mainly written, reaching to the very heart and core of social disease, unhappy wedded life—the marriages that are not made in heaven, but if anywhere out of this strange world, why least of all in Heaven. Of all marvels in this same universe that pass our poor philosophy I doubt not this of marriage is the very strangest, seeing to what end it has arrived at last, and from what beginning! Were one to ask the sober question now at

this late hour, why was it first ordained, how would he be answered? would it solve the problem we see before us daily? Suppose he should answer to this result—"It was ordained to bear the burden of a great mystery, the secret of the marriage of the Lamb, that we might not be without a continual symbol whereby to comprehend that holy union, that when the Bridegroom came we might know him and receive him worthily." Mysticism! say you: not so, but forgotten truth. What if it should indeed be found at last that not mere palpable finite evil is the harvest of godless marriages, not broken hearts nor spotted life nor dishonoured children only, but that we have done infinite dishonour and despite to the holy thing it signified? How will it be then? Who shall lay damages and plead and give sentence then? Does that story of Christ's marriage with his people come home to us pure and holy? is there no darkness in our comprehension of the type? If men would learn to believe of all things here that they are but dim revelations of a hidden glory, that every finite thing in this vast universe is linked by ultimate relation to some eter-

nity, is bound indissolubly to the feet of God; that not an act nor law nor visible thing whatever but has its greater counterpart out of space and Time—there would be less mockery and jesting in the world and more earnestness, less doing for fashion's sake and more for Christ's.

The plot of the story teems with marriages that should never have been made, differing in extent of subsequent misery, according to the degree of good or evil natures brought together. There is Madame de Florac, holy, prayerful, self-sacrificing—her life has been a painful vigil; she has been dying daily; hardly after forty years can she say tranquilly, "when the end comes with its great absolution I shall not be sorry." How then shall it be with Clive, paired, but not matched with his foolish little wife? she cannot understand him, has no companionship for him; after all our indignation she is perhaps thoughtless more than selfish, or if selfish, capable of transformation; she deserved at least a better fate; yet they might have lived not unhappily, spite of all this. But Clive was not in love with her—loved some one else too surely, and, knowing this, it was an

evil step to take—thoughtlessly, carelessly cruel; in the sight of their elders it seemed an excellent match—money and youth, and beauty and amiable indifference—and behold the end! But what shall be said of the marriage in high life? what of the domestic hearth and family bosom of Sir Barnes Newcome, Bart. of Newcome? if the last was sufficiently heart-rending, what shall be said of this? Too truly it is an old story; we have seen it elsewhere also: above all others, one is before me in all the memory of its painted horrors—Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*, which seems its painted counterpart.

It is a subject of regret that the narrow limits of a single essay do not admit of a fuller investigation into these social questions; so shallow and void it seems to name them only and pass on, but it must be so. There is one more great social problem, however, set forth and answered in the lives of the actors of the book, which must share in this hasty sketch—a woefully neglected subject of thought, to the evil results of which oblivion one can place no definite bounds; but in this case I the less regret

the brevity of what must be said, because the question, and much more that appertains to it, is embodied in a pamphlet on pre-Raphaelitism, by Ruskin, and continually in other portions of his works, to be hereafter commented on in these pages.

I refer principally to that episode in Clive's life where he makes known to his father the desire of his heart to become a painter, and dedicate his life to that end; and the good Colonel loving his son so that he would gladly die for him, cannot be brought to see it with the eyes of his son. Can understand him adopting it for amusement's sake, refined *dilettantism*; but to be a painter by profession—to live by the labour of his hands so, this he cannot comprehend, this society and immaculate respectability cannot endure. So poor Clive has a hard battle to fight; even Ethel can give him no sympathy, views his dreamland through a London fog. After all our rhapsodies about soul, what do we really sacrifice for it? We, men who have written so many volumes upon it and its immortal nature, who have called it by such high-sounding names for the sake of naming it, though none should ever express it worthily

save with lips covered and deep silence, calling it Shekinah, and the articulate voice of God, heard louder than thunder and the voice of waters; sweeter than any wind. And yet for that evil genius Fashion, we could darken this Shekinah, close our ears against that clear-sounding voice for ever. Respectability? When shall we waken from this nightmare and dream of phantoms to a knowledge of the true dignity of work in any kind; to a confession of the majesty of soul in any form? I wish that the primal question at the setting out of life were not *what* is the best thing to do, and the most thought of, but rather *how* and in what manner and degree of excellence it is to be done. I claim at once an express assent to the position, that the work we do we do not for ourselves, nor our own pleasure nor advancement, but in the name of Christ, according to his commandment; and then for our children's sake, that we may make them better, happier; and then for the sake of all who have gone before us, that the travail and sorrow of their hard battle may not be unfruitful, may not become the desolation of wasted energy. It is the only

premise upon which I can worthily found the conclusion that our work, whatsoever it be, must be the best of its kind, the noblest we can offer. So the former question frames itself anew: "What is the best that any man can give?" And God has given us an answer, "that in which he finds most happiness," for this testimony he has sealed with truth.

And is this the question, O fathers, that you ask your children, and teach them to ask themselves, "what they have most happiness in?"—not transitory, idle pleasure, but enduring happiness; hence what they are most fitted for, what they can do best, what they can honour God most by doing. If this were the first inquiry, and were made the law and final cause in all our choice of action, I think we should meet less and less with those palpable signs of hurry and indifference, and listlessness and utter weariness, which face us at every turn, and paralyse alike art and government, and social relations,—a wide and fruitful subject for after development. Here, unhappily, is room only for hasty notice, and a promise that the question shall be taken up at some future time.

Of Thackeray's manner and style of writing a few words, the characteristics, I conceive, to be principally two, Humour and Pathos, most noble in combination: and first, of his humour, we meet it continually in gentle irony and glancing satire, as well as more directly in his open, laughing cheerfulness: it is for this, chiefly, that he is no favourite with religious parties; being such as they are, we will not regret it too severely: thus at least one agrees with them that it is a hard thing to be laughed at, and thus far with him also, that it is a hard thing not to laugh. Perhaps people differ more about jesting, and its proper conditions of object, manner and place, than about really serious things: this Babel of laughter sadly wants a music-master—one to strike the key-note and lead off the noisy chorus; for people will laugh, and who shall refuse them? "Laughter is like sunshine," says Carlyle; only let us keep in memory that story of the Apes by the Dead Sea. Like all else in Babel it lacks a reasonable soul at times, and in want of this will have to be taught roughly its proper whereabouts, lest it trespass upon holy ground; for laughter is not first nor

best: love and faith, and hope and long-suffering, and self-sacrifice are raised high above its inarticulate din. For the sake of Him who gave them we will never laugh at these, and because we read not ever that He laughed while dwelling among men; but at whatsoever is mean and proud, and selfish and over-reaching, and hypocritical, laughter long and loud that shall strike the stars.

Sin truly is very foul and fearful; in its effects terrible, crushing the heart of man with overwhelming hopelessness, and oftentimes the terror of wickedness cannot but be uppermost in thought; yet it were a good thing also, and a sign of greater constancy and stronger faith, to feel how utterly contemptible it is, how laughable and ridiculous its miserable existence, and it is here that I imagine Thackeray has done good service to truth of morality and fact:—of morality, because he sets up crime in a kind of pillory for universal laughter and derision: no catastrophe and fearful overtaking of punishment to make his villains martyrs after all; loud laughter only and utter scorn, such as becomes men to feel, for who can calculate the folly of sin? and truth of fact in his

account of retributive justice and fidelity to its general fate. His is not that fair land of romance and faërie, where the good are rewarded after sorrows, and the evil punished after short success, but rather the life we live, a fretful, sore, and envious life for many who behold the wicked in high places, and the throne of iniquity set up, and themselves cast out.

Of his pathos what shall I say? so true, so musical, one would not think that human speech were so very musical; it exalts him everywhere into highest poetry; as colour glorifies everything it overlays, so does the great sympathising heart everything it comes near and dwells with. In those scenes between the Colonel and his son, chiefly in that one after Clive knows of Ethel's betrothal, and his father's noble offer of sacrifice, and again in the reconciliation at the close of the book; they speak like man to man, in the very simplest words, because of the agony of the hour, but there is sweetest music in every word. And those letters of Madame de Florac, so full of the memory of an ancient sorrow, and a life that has been dying daily, "One supports the combats

of life, but they are long, and one comes from them very wounded: ah! when shall they be over?" Alas! for ill-fated, forgotten love, colouring all the background of their lives with a melancholy twilight gloom, beautiful, profound: in all story I remember not anywhere the like, from that first parting for life to that last shriek, Léonore, how full is it of the anguish of enduring memory! "Did it not seem once as if two hands never could unlock, so closely were they enlaced together? ah! mine are old and feeble now; forty years have passed since the time when you used to say that they were young and fair. How well I remember me of every one of those days, though there is a death between me and them, and it is across a grave I review them." This is like the melody of an old song we have not heard for years, like that burden of the song of tears, "O death in life! the days that are no more!" Some time we shall meet Clive and Ethel again, and J. J. also, when all the letters and life-passages about him have been collected, and then we shall be admitted to his dreamland; weak, deformed, and silent, he is the genius of them all, the most inspired

amongst them; *au revoir*, J. J., it is not for long.

So let us end, not as having completed the half of our task, nor spoken that half well, as became the subject, but withal faithfully. This book has gone forth now upon a great embassy, gone forth from us into the future, bearing with it the seal and signature of truth; for even while the memory of its sweet pages is yet abiding, and we think upon all these things, the gain, the suffering, and the loss, and all the tumult of our life, even now the days are gathering in and closing upon us, and presently, very shortly, we shall be called the past, and our deeds good or evil will be judged of men in other years. This book also will be a record of us; flesh of our flesh will read it, and see what manner of men their fathers were. Will they speak lovingly, kindly of us, remembering the good to our account, the evil to their own? Will they stretch forth hands of blessing, not remembering the sorrow nor the curse we have handed down to them, so much heavier than we received ourselves, by the weight of all our evil days? Will they forgive us all these things? Is it also our wont

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so to deal with our fathers' memory, to speak mercifully, gratefully of them? too truly this lack of reverence must go down also in the catalogue of our great sins.

Thackeray will, I doubt not, one day be numbered with the great naturalists in all time, a lesser Shakespeare in golden and coloured chronicles, in a goodly company of painters, poets, and musicians, all who have ever burned with consuming love for men, or struck the key-note of human triumph and lamentation into loud pæans and enduring song.

A few words concerning Mr. Doyle's illustrations. I have something also to say previously upon the entire subject of illustrations, which may be fairly spoken here. Engravings have of late become a very essential feature in book-making, so that their very frequency alone, as testifying the direction of public taste, requires that this long silence and oblivion of their merits should be broken, and they should be forthwith acknowledged as a subject of criticism. I fear almost we have too many of them, being such as they for the most part are; that generally there is too much work for

the engraver, too little thought from the artist: any drawings are good for children, only certain ones for men; dogs and cows and houses and trees, the more generalized the better for spelling-books; but not such as these, something widely different from these, for men. In looking over a vast majority of book engravings, one is struck with the same want of purpose and absence of interest and particular truth, which attaches to that dreary mountain of fiction and false romance we were just now condemning; about as separably interesting they seem as the stones in a pyramid; alas! one grieves to say, but for such as these the desert and illimitable sand-sea is the place of their ultimate abiding, the inevitable destiny of labour without thought. More than enough truly have we of these useless illustrations that can tell us no new thing, nor give palpable embodiment to our confused thoughts, and so perpetuate them. When shall we learn to read a picture as we would a poem, to find some story from it, some little atom of human interest that may feed our hearts withal, lest the outer influences of the day crush them from good thoughts? when will

men look for these things, and the artist satisfy them? We desire to hear these artists, so many and so good, speak to us as they can do in their own sweet language, not a strange one altogether, easily to be learned even by listening only, and once learnt, universal, wide as the great world; a wonderful language, such as no other is, save music and sculpture; but let us not be for ever put off with husks till we cease to look for any good. We are not forced to have illustrations to our books, not forced to have books themselves; nay, if we will think of it, not forced to have many things we count essential. Men lived and suffered, thought, and died, long before they painted or wrote; but we are forced to have them good if at all: this we do need. It is an everlasting truth that if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well; I say not *perfectly*, that is quite a different matter, unattainable, a proud word, ever doomed for mockery and defeat, but that it should be the best we can give, the fruit of the travail of our soul; and this we look for vainly. I think if we all understood the kind of labour it necessitates to produce a slight engraving,

we should be less tolerant of this thoughtless multiplication of purposeless designs. No happy or wholesome work, nay, in steel engraving positively injurious, is the condition of our having them; and then moreover, to let pass the matter of bodily injury, which no man may do with impunity, and consider it upon higher ground, it becomes at once a simple and palpable choice of good or evil: no spiritual or imaginative work this copying of other men's thoughts, nothing here satisfying and developing, altogether a sacrifice and slavish self-abnegation. It should at least be something good or needful that we make the subject of such sacrifice, not indifferent or unnecessary, such as we can easily do without, no mere question of book-making on the handsome page principle: for every line so perpetuated in engraving, let us remember some human soul has foregone its freedom and invention and creative energy, which is the soul of art, for our good. One day too surely shall we need a reason for every time we trifled with the labour of the meanest man, and it will be no answer that we did not know these things.

Some few years ago a monthly periodical

was published upon the subject of art and poetry; it appears to have ceased after a few numbers, not without having spoken something that will live in echoes yet.¹ As the frontispiece of one number was an etching by Holman Hunt, an illustration indeed to a poem, but the latter having so little reference to it, that it may well stand for an independent picture; truly a song without words, and yet not wholly speechless, for out of its golden silence came voices for all who would hearken, telling a tale of love. Two lovers are together in a meadow, by a pool of standing water, and behind them a circle of trees is throwing morning shadows on the grass; she is kneeling, stooping forwards to gather wild flowers growing on the bank, clasped and circled by the arm of him who loves her and shall be her future lord, he is bending lovingly over her, shielding her from harm; yet there is

¹ THE GERM: | Thoughts toward Nature | In Poetry, Literature, and Art. | London: | Aylott & Jones, 8, Paternoster Row. 1850. The four original numbers, with reproductions of the etchings, fac-similes of the wrappers, and other interesting and valuable features, have just been reprinted by Mr. Mosher.

no peril in the water, and the space between her and the edge is great, still he clasps her lightly, guarding her from a danger that is not; judge of it, O lovers! how true it is. But below, in another scene, lies a figure flung upon the foreground, lying all his length, and his face pressed deeply into the fresh mould of a grave, for behind him, in the distance, the nuns are passing, singing *Dies iræ* and *Beati mortui*, and the bell is sounding close behind him as he lies quiet. Surely he will never rise and come away! wherefore did she die, and how? and was it long after the flower-gathering by the water side on the summer day. I know how it all came to pass, and you would also if you saw the picture: silently, quite silently, has the story taken form. I would not tell the legend as it comes to me, for your version would be altogether otherwise, and yet both most true: something like this we cry for, is it not like a cry for food?

Out of oblivion, for the sake of justice, I have made this memorial of a forgotten picture; not for invidious distinction, or because it is the only articulate voice among so many: it serves to exemplify my meaning

about story in pictures. There is one more I cannot help noticing, for its marvellous beauty, a drawing of higher finish and pretension than the last, from the pencil of Rossetti, in "Allingham's Day and Night Songs," just published; it is I think the most beautiful drawing for an illustration I have ever seen, the weird faces of the maids of Elfinmere, the musical timed movement of their arms together as they sing, the face of the man, above all, are such as only a great artist could conceive. Why is the author of the Blessed Damozel, and the story of Chiaro, so seldom on the lips of men? if only we could hear him oftener, live in the light of his power a little longer.

Now the want I have complained of, a want of purpose, and the power of making the drawing tell its story well, is the very last to be charged against Mr. Doyle; from such a happy combination of author and artist as so rarely occurs much was to be expected, and has accordingly been fulfilled. Yet what does apply in what I have said is this, that a certain kind of mechanical demand (how far necessary to a book published by numbers I cannot say), for having

a determinate quantity of illustration, irrespective of the capabilities of the matter for artistic treatment, cannot but fetter the artist very considerably, and lessen his facility of movement. Many of the scenes chosen perhaps do not really afford a subject for illustration, and we have no right to be disappointed, or our disappointment may be accidental, arising from our preconceived mental pictures not being coincident with the artist's arrangement; and here satisfaction, or the contrary, will be proportionate to the reader's power of realizing the scenes pictorially as he reads on, or supposing him to possess this faculty according to his freedom from or enthrallment to them. The main illustrations, however, seem to me far less successful than the rest, not striking or great in conception, nor, if faithfully interpreted in the engraving, always well executed: but in the symbolical drawings, which form round the initial letters of chapters,¹ it is very different; here he is

¹ More particularly I would specify the initials to chapters—Vol. I. c. xxvi. xxx. xxxvi. Illustrations to pp. 45, 75, 165, 317. Vol. II. c. iii. iv. vi. xx. xxviii. xxxi. Illustrations pp. 59, 71, 178, 249.

ESSAY ON THE NEWCOMES

wonderfully successful, and, as an artist should ever be, no faint echo of other men's thoughts, but a voice concurrent or prophetic, full of meaning; they are little sketches apt to be passed over in carelessness, but on examination found to be full of real art and poetical comprehension.



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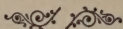
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1. *Echoes from Theocritus, and Other Poems.* London, 1885. His sonnets first appeared in four small pamphlets, 'Echoes from Theocritus,' 'Cytisus and Galingale,' 'Windows of the Church,' and 'Sketches and Studies,' (*Blackbeath: H. Burnside, 1883.*) Since then we have had *Edward Cracroft Lefroy His Life and Poems, by Wilfred Austin Gill, London, 1897.*

2. In the *Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays, by John Addington Symonds, pp. 87-110. London, 1893.*

and maidens' revealed themselves anew to him—this youth of To-day.

If the authentic lyric cry of another equally unknown poet is absent, there is to take its place an indefinable barking back to the 'violet land of Greece'—the undying countryside of Theocritus. These thirty sonnets are each and every signed by a master's hand. In them the idyllic charm is surely existent. The sense of joy and tears in mortal things is inescapably there.

Poet of Theocritean themes, great scholar of the Renaissance, are not the words of Cleanthes' hymn translated by one of you fit inscription for your twain resting-places?—

"Lead thou me, God, Law, Reason, Motion, Life,
All names for Thee alike are vain and hollow :
Lead me, for I will follow without strife,
Or if I strive, still must I blindly follow !"

3. William Cory, author of *Ionica*, published anonymously in 1858, and re-issued with additions in 1891. His version of the epitaph by Callimachus on Heracleitus is unsurpassed. A forthcoming Bibelot will presently deal with his poetry.

FOR DECEMBER :

- I. MEMORIAL VERSES
ON THE DEATH OF THEOPHILE GAUTIER :
- II. AVE ATQUE VALE
BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

ECHOES
from
THEOCRITUS.

*How changed is Nature from the Time antique !
The world we see to-day is dumb and cold :
It has no word for us. Not thus of old
It won heart-worship from the enamoured Greek.
Through all fair forms he heard the Beauty speak ;
To him glad tidings of the unknown were told
By babbling runlets, or sublimely rolled
In thunder from the cloud-enveloped peak.
He caught a message at the oak's great girth,
While prisoned Hamadryads weirdly sang :
He stood where 'Delphi's Voice had chasm-birth,
And o'er strange vapour watched the Sibyl hang ;
Or where, mid throbbings of the tremulous earth,
The caldrons of Dodona pulsed and rang.*

EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY.

THE thirty "Echoes from Theocritus" are all penetrated with that purged Hellenic sentiment which was the note of Lefroy's genius. They are exquisite cameos in miniature carved upon fragments broken from the idylls; nor do I disagree with a critic who said, when they first appeared, that "rarely has the great pastoral poet been so freely transmuted without loss of his spell."

The artistic value of Lefroy's work is great. — Lefroy proved that it is possible to combine religious faith with frank delight in natural loveliness, to be a Christian without asceticism, and a Greek without sensuality. I can imagine that this will appear simple to many of my readers. They will exclaim: "We do not need a minor poet like Lefroy to teach that lesson. Has not the problem been solved by thousands?" Perhaps it has. But there is a specific note, a particular purity, a clarified distinction, in the amalgam offered by Lefroy. What I have called his spiritual apperception of sensuous beauty was the outcome of a rare and exquisite personality. It has the translucent quality of a gem, beryl or jacinth, which, turn it to the light and view it from all sides, retains one flawless colour. This simplicity and absolute sincerity of instinct is surely uncommon in our perplexed epoch. To rest for a moment upon the spontaneous and unambitious poetry which flowed from such a nature cannot fail to refresh minds wearied with the storm and stress of modern thought. To abide in communion with an individuality so finely and felicitously moulded must be a source of strength and soothing to those even who find themselves incapable of taking up exactly the same fundamental principles.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

ECHOES FROM THEOCRITUS.

I.

BATTUS.

O SUN-BROWNED shepherd, whose untutored grace
Awoke the Singer of that southern isle,
What time he lingered in his father's place,
And bore not yet his music to the Nile:
How soon we make in life a tranquil space
Whenas, our foolish cares forgot the while,
We read the legend of thy classic face,
And catch the lustre of thy lyric smile.
Sing to us still in songs of tourney-type,
As if the jealous Milon loitered near,
Or let thy fingers twinkle o'er the pipe,
And breathe a mellow cadence sweet and clear,
Till all thy browsing lambs forego the ripe
Arbutus buds, and circle round to hear.

A SHEPHERD MAIDEN.

ON shores of Sicily a shape of Greece!
Dear maid, what means this lonely communing
With winds and waves? What fancy, what caprice,
Has drawn thee from thy fellows? Do they fling
Rude jests at thee? Or seekest thou surcease
Of drowsy toil in noonday shepherding?
Enough: our questions cannot break thy peace;
Thou art a shade,—a long-entombèd thing.
But still we see thy sun-lit face, O sweet,
Shining eternal where it shone of yore;
Still comes a vision of blue-veinèd feet
That stand for ever on a pebbly shore;
While round, the tidal waters flow and fleet
And ripple, ripple, ripple, evermore.

DAPHNIS.

WHEN Daphnis comes adown the purple steep
From out the rolling mists that wrap the dawn,
Leaving aloft his crag-encradled sheep,
Leaving the snares that vex the dappled fawn,
He gives the signal for the flight of sleep,
And hurls a windy blast from hunter's horn
At rose-hung lattices, whence maidens peep
To glimpse the young glad herald of the morn.
Then haply one will rise and bid him take
A brimming draught of new-drawn milk a-foam;
But fleet his feet and fain; he will not break
His patient fast at any place but home,
Where his fond mother waits him with a cake
And lucent honey dripping from the comb.

A SICILIAN NIGHT.

COME, stand we here within this cactus-brake,
And let the leafy tangle cloak us round.
It is the spot whereof the Seer spake—
To nymph and faun a nightly trysting-ground.
How still the scene! No zephyr stirs to shake
The listening air. The trees are slumber-bound
In soft repose. There's not a bird awake
To witch the silence with a silver sound.
Now haply shall the vision trance our eyes,
By heedless mortals all too rarely scanned,
Of mystic maidens in immortal guise,
Who mingle shadowy hand with shadowy hand,
And moving o'er the lilies circle-wise,
Beat out with naked feet a saraband.

A SUMMER DAY IN OLD SICILY.

GODS, what a sun! I think the world's aglow.
This garment irks me. Phœbus, it is hot!
'T were sad if Glycera should find me shot
By flame-tipped arrows from the Archer's bow.
Perchance he envies me,—the villain! O
For one tree's shadow or a cliff-side grot!
Where shall I shelter that he slay me not?
In what cool air or element? I know.
The sea shall save me from the sweltering land.
Far out I'll wade, till creeping up and up,
The cold green water quenches every limb.
Then to the jealous god with lifted hand
I'll pour libation from a rosy cup,
And leap, and dive, and see the tunnies swim.

SIMAETHA, I.

Idyl ii.

G o, pluck me laurel-leaves, dear Thestylis,
From any bough that shimmers in the moon;
To dread Selene pray the while, and miss
No single word of all the magic rune.
She, only she, can grant the lover's boon,
She, only she, restore a maiden's bliss;
He comes not now, my sweet, but soon, O soon,
He will be waiting, watching, for my kiss.
Twelve days; ah! is it twelve, since last we met?
Quick wind about the bowl the ruddy skein!
He has forgotten: cruel to forget!
But this red wool shall rouse him into pain,
This charm of charms shall wake his passion yet.
O good my goddess, bring my Love again!

SIMAETHA, II.

Now take the barley grains, sweet Thestylis,
And fling them right and left upon the floor;
If still he lingers, Delphis' bones like this
Shall be disjoined upon a wreck-strewn shore.
See how I burn the laurel shoots. They hiss
And curl and crackle, blasted to the core;
And Delphis' flesh shall wither up like this
Unless he quickly seeks my shamèd door.
In brazen pans the wax is melting fast:
O gracious goddess, bid thy work begin!
So melt young Delphis, till he speeds at last,
Beneath my window wails his bitter sin,—
Begs me to pardon all his folly past
And of my clemency to let him in.

THE GOATHERD IN LOVE.

Idyl iii., 1-7.

GOOD Tityrus, attend these goats awhile,
And let me seek where Amaryllis hides,
Crannied, I guess, beneath that rocky pile
With fern atop and ivy-mantled sides.
'Tis there most days the merry girl abides,
And flashes from her cave a sudden smile,
Which like a pharos-flame her lover guides
And makes him hope he looks not wholly vile.
If thou canst guard the flock while I am gone,
I will but notice how my lady fares,
Then hasten back and take the crook anon.
The goats are tame—the least of all my cares,
Save one, that tawny thief; keep watch upon
His bearing, lest he butt thee unawares.

THE LOVE-SPELL.

Idyl iii., 28-30.

I THOUGHT upon my lady as I strode
Last night from labour, and bemoaned my lot,
Uncertain if she loves or loves me not,
Who gives no sign or token; till the road
Bent round and took me past my Love's abode.
And then some happy chance, I know not what,
Moved me to try a spell long time forgot,
By which Love's issue may be clear foreshowed.
I plucked a poppy from the wayside grass
And struck it sharply on my naked arm,
Striving to burst its inner heart. Alas!
The petals only clung in painless calm.
And then I knew how this could never be,
That my dear Love's dear heart should break for me.

SIMICHIDAS.

Idyl vii., 21-26.

SIMICHIDAS, thou love-demented loon!
 What haste is this, when no man's need doth call?
 Surely the gods have witched thee. 'Tis high noon.
 No creature else hath any strength at all;
 The spotted lizard sleeps upon the wall;
 The skiey larks drop earthward for the boon
 Of one still hour; the ants forget to crawl.
 Naught stirs except the stones beneath thy shoon.
 Nay, but I know; not love impels thee thus;
 Thy journey's end will bring a baser gain.
 Some burgher's feast or vintner's overplus
 Of trodden grapes—for these thy feet are fain.
 Well, go thy way; be fortunate. But us
 This pleasant shade retains and shall retain.

AGEANAX.

Idyl vii., 52-62.

DEAR voyager, a lucky star be thine,
 To Mytilenè sailing over sea,
 Or foul or fair the constellations shine,
 Or east or west the wind-blown billows flee.
 May halcyon-birds that hover o'er the brine
 Diffuse abroad their own tranquility,
 Till ocean stretches stilly as the wine
 In this deep cup which now we drain to thee.
 From lip to lip the merry circle through
 We pass the tankard and repeat thy name;
 And having pledged thee once, we pledge anew,
 Lest in thy friends' neglect thou suffer shame.
 God-speed to ship, good health to pious crew,
 Peace by the way, and port of noble fame!

COMATAS.

Idyl vii., 78-82.

I^N the great cedar chest for one whole year
The pious goatherd by his lord confined,
Because he reckoned not his flock more dear
Than the dear Muse he served with loyal mind,
Was fed by ministers whom none can bind—
The blunt-faced bees that came from far and near,
Spreading the Muse's signal on the wind,
And found a crevice, and distilled the clear
Sweet juice of flowers to feed the prisoned thrall,
Till the slow months went round and he was free.
Then, tuneful herds, spare not the fold and stall
For sacrifice, nor fear your lord may see;
The Muse can save her servants when they call—
The Muse who sped that long captivity.

AT THE SHRINE OF PAN.

Idyl vii., 106-108.

O GOATISH god, I pray you! Grant my prayer,
And in my view great Zeus is less divine :
Reject it,—at your peril,—if you dare!
And look no more for any gift of mine.
And who will then support this paltry shrine?
Though you yourself subsist on frugal fare,
Others have wants, and as the wise opine,
'Tis never well to leave the cupboard bare.
Few thieves will quite good-humouredly forego
Their wonted booty from the sacred sod;
And herb-whips sting; I think at least you know
With what effect some boys can wield the rod.
Observe in time how thick these nettles grow,
And flee the shame that waits a pauper god.

AT THE FARM OF PHRASIDAMUS.

Idyl vii., 133-146.

WHERE elm and poplar branch to branch have grown,
In cool deep shade the shepherds take their rest
On beds of fragrant vine-leaves newly strown,
Till the great sun declineth in the west.
From thorny thickets round, as if opprest
By secret care, the ring-dove maketh moan;
With sudden cry from some remoter nest
The nooning owlet hunts in dreams alone;
A merry noise the burnt cicalas make,
While honeyed horns are droning everywhere;
The fruit-trees bend as though foredoomed to break
• With burden heavier than their strength can bear,
And if the faintest zephyr seem to shake,
Drop down an apple now, and now a pear.

THE SINGING-MATCH, I.

Idyl viii.

FROM upland pastures, where the flocks are wending,
 Slow-footed ways through heather-bells and fern,
 Comes down a sound with sea-born murmurs blending
 Of lips that make sweet melody in turn.

'Tis Daphnis with Menalcas sharp-contending
 For the bright flute which both are keen to earn;
 While hard at hand a goatherd tarries, bending
 Rapt ears of judgment while the singers burn.
 Menalcas, first, hymns Love and all the blessing
 Which haps to field and fold where Love's feet stray;
 He tells of dearth and leanness clear confessing
 What ills befall, should Love despised betray;
 Ah, poor the man, though land and gold possessing,
 In whose demesne no Love consents to stay.

THE SINGING-MATCH, II.

THEN Daphnis strikes the note of one that plaineth,
Whose Love is not the Love he hoped to find ;
A Love which after blandishment disdaineth
To bless the heart too readily resigned.
Slight snares indeed are they which Eros feigneth,
For well he knows that lover's eyes are blind,
But none the captured beast more keenly paineth
Than Love's entrapment cruelly unkind.
All things have grief at times. When high winds shake it,
The grove is grieved with plaintive murmurings ;
So grieves the woodland bird when fowlers take it,
To feel the net encompassing its wings ;
And so the heart when peace and joy forsake it
At Love's enravishment. Thus Daphnis sings.

THE SINGING-MATCH, III.

AND last the goatherd, like as one awoken
From sylvan slumbers on a summer day,
Whose sleep is filled with birds, and only broken
Because the thrushes all have flown away,—
Uplifts his head, and with a word soft-spoken
Declares the victor in the bloodless fray:
'Thine is the flute, O Daphnis! Take the token,
For thou hast conquered with the crowning lay.
And, O, if thou wilt teach to carol brightly
This mouth of mine, as through the fields we go,
To thee shall fall a monster goat that nightly
Makes every milking-bowl to overflow.'
Then clapped the lad his hands, and leapt as lightly
As weanling fawns that leap around the doe.

MENALCAS.

Idyl viii., 63-66.

WITH limbs out-stretched along the thymy ground
 The dog Lampùrus slumbers in the shade,
 While tender ewes unchecked by warning sound
 Go wandering idly through the sylvan glade,
 In guileless ignorance all undismayed
 By cruel beasts that hold the copse around
 And make the herd Menalcas half-afraid—
 The boyish herd who cries: ‘O heedless hound,
 Is this thy helping of my timorous youth—
 To let the flock disperse the woods among,
 With no preventing feet, no faithful tongue?
 The very wolves might show a deeper ruth,
 And spare to raven with ensanguined tooth,
 Seeing the shepherd of the sheep is young.’

THE TOMB OF DIOCLES.

Idyl xii., 27-33.

HERE, stranger, pause, and take a moment's ease
With pleasant thinking on a good man dead.
This marble marks the tomb of Diocles;
Say not that virtue sleeps unhallowèd !
The grateful tribes delight with arts like these
To deck the pillow of a noble head.
Nor are these all; beneath yon arching trees
The merriest chorus of the spring is led.
For on a day from country cots around
Come troops of ruddy children fair of face,
And forming rings about this holy ground,
Contest the guerdon of a bright embrace;
And whoso kisseth with the deftest grace
Goes homeward to his mother, happy, crowned.

HYLAS.

Idyl xiii.

WHAT pool is this by galingale surrounded,
 With parsley and tall iris overgrown?
 It is the pool whose wayward nymphs confounded
 The quest of Heracles to glut their own
 Desire of love. Its depths hath no man sounded
 Save the young Mysian argonaut alone,
 When round his drooping neck he felt, astounded,
 The cruel grasp that sank him like a stone.
 Through all the land the Hero wandered, crying
 'Hylas!' and 'Hylas!' till the close of day,
 And thrice there came a feeble voice replying
 From watery caverns where the prisoner lay;
 Yet to his ear it seemed but as the sighing
 Of zephyrs through the forest far away.

THE TUNNY-FISHERS.

Idyl xxi.

IN rude log-cabin by the lone sea-shore
Two aged fishers slept the sleep of toil.
Rough was their life, and scant their household store,
Scarce aught but hooks and nets and seamen's coil.
To one of these came visions of strange spoil;
He caught a fish—such fish as none before
Caught ever, bright with sheen and glittering foil,
A golden fish; and made high vows no more
To sail the seas, but spend the troven gold;
Then woke and wept to starve or be forsworn.
To whom his fellow: 'Surely, being old,
Thou drivellest. Vow and vision both are born
Of air. Catch living fish or die.' And cold
Through eastern windows crept the ashy dawn.

THE YOUTH OF HERACLES.

Idyl xxiv., 101-102.

As when in flowerful gardens, lofty-girt
With thicket-hedge of ilex, oak, and vine,
Where northern breezes do no mortal hurt,
And warmer suns have constant leave to shine,
A tender sapling, be it larch or pine,
Shoots always upward with a daily spirt,
Thanks to the woven boughs that round it twine,
Thanks to the shelter of its leafy skirt:
So in a tranquil and secluded place,
Where never pierced the faintest note of harm,
The Argive hero grew and waxed apace,
Enclosed and compassed by Alcmena's arm;
And knew not as he watched the mother's-face
The mother's-love that fenced him from alarm.

THE FLUTE OF DAPHNIS.

Epigram ii.

I AM the flute of Daphnis. On this wall
 He nailed his tribute to the great god Pan,
 What time he grew from boyhood, shapely, tall,
 And felt the first deep ardours of a man.
 Through adult veins more swift the song-tide ran,—
 A vernal stream whose swollen torrents call
 For instant ease in utterance. Then began
 That course of triumph revered by all.
 Him the gods loved, and more than other men
 Blessed with the flower of beauty, and endowed
 His soul of music with the strength of ten.
 Now on a festal day I see the crowd
 Look fondly at my resting-place, and when
 I think whose lips have pressed me, I am proud.

A SACRED GROVE.

Epigram iv.

I KNOW a spot where Love delights to dream,
 Because he finds his fancies happen true.
 Within its fence no myrtle ever grew
 That failed in wealth of flower; no sunny beam
 Has used its vantage vainly. You might deem
 Yourself a happy plant and blossom too,
 Or be a bird and sing as thrushes do,
 So sweet in that fair place doth nature seem.
 A matted vine invests the rocks above,
 And tries to kiss a runlet leaping through
 With endless laughter. Hither at noon comes Love,
 And woos the god who is not hard to woo,
 Taking his answer from the nested dove
 That ever hymneth skies for ever blue.

A SYLVAN REVEL.

Epigram v.

WHAT ho! my shepherds, sweet it were
To fill with song this leafy glade.
Bring harp and flute. The gods have made
An hour for music. Daphnis there
Shall give the note with jocund blare
From out his horn. The rest will aid
With fifes and drums, and charm the shade,
And rout the dusky wings of care.
We'll pipe to fox and wolf and bear,
We'll wake the wood with rataplan,
Fetch every beast from every lair,
Make every creature dance who can,
Set every Satyr's hoof in air,
And tickle both the feet of Pan!

THYRSIS.

Epigram vi.

SAD Thyrsis weeps till his blue eyes are dim,
 Because the wolf has torn his pride away,—
 The little kid so apt for sport and play,
 Which knew his voice and loved to follow him.
 Who would not weep that cruel Fate and grim
 Should end her pranks on this unhappy day,
 And give her tender innocence a prey
 For savage jaws to harry limb from limb?
 Yet think, O shepherd, how thy tears are vain
 To rouse the dead or bring the slain again;
 Beyond all hope her body lies, alack!
 Devoured she is; no bones of her remain.
 The leaping hounds are on the murderer's track,
 But will they, can they, bear thy darling back?

CLEONICUS.

Epigram ix.

LET sailors watch the waning Pleiades,
And keep the shore. This man, made over-bold
By godless pride, and too much greed of gold,
Setting his gains before his health and ease,
Ran up his sails to catch the whistling breeze :
Whose corpse, ere now, the restless waves have rolled
From deep to deep, while all his freight, unsold,
Is tossed upon the tumult of the seas.
Such fate had one whose avaricious eyes
Lured him to peril in a mad emprise.
Yea, from the Syrian coast to Thasos bound,
He slipped his anchor with rich merchandise,
While the wet stars were slipping from the skies,
And with the drowning stars untimely drowned.

THE EPITAPH OF EUSTHENES.

Epigram xi.

A BARD is buried here, not strong, but sweet;
 A Teacher too, not great, but gently wise;
 This modest stone (the burghers thought it meet)
 May tell the world where so much virtue lies.
 His happy skill it was in mart and street
 To scan men's faces with a true surmise,
 Follow the spirit to its inmost seat,
 And read the soul reflected in the eyes.
 No part had he in catholic renown,
 Which none but god-inspired poets share;
 Not his to trail the philosophic gown,
 That only sages of the School may wear;
 But his at least to fill an alien town
 With friends, who make his tomb their loving care.

THE MONUMENT OF CLEITA.

Epigram xviii.

HERE Cleita sleeps. You ask her life and race?
 Read on, and learn a simple tale and true.
 A nurse she was from the far land of Thrace,
 Who tended little Medëus while he grew
 A healthy, happy child, and did imbue
 His nascent mind with godliness and grace;
 So fencing him from evil that he knew
 No word of what is impious or base.
 And when at length, her tale of years all told,
 She came to lie in this reposeful spot,
 Young Medëus, still a child, but sagely old,
 Upreared this monument, that unforgot
 The care beyond his recompense of gold
 Might live a memory and perish not.

THE GRAVE OF HIPPÒNAX.

Epigram xxi.

HERE lies a bard, Hippònax—honoured name !
 Sweet were the songs that won him endless praise,
 And yet his life was sweeter than his lays.
 Traveller, a question fronts thee : Canst thou claim
 Kinship with such in conduct void of blame ?
 If not, forbear this precinct ; go thy ways ;
 Lest some bright watcher of the tomb should raise
 A jealous hand to cover thee with shame.
 But if thy soul is free from shade of guilt,
 Or, having sinned, hath been at length forgiven,
 To thee all rights of common kin belong ;
 Lay down thy weary limbs, and, if thou wilt,
 Let slumber wrap them round, nor fear that Heaven
 Will suffer any sprite to do thee wrong.



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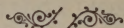
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¹ See *Miscellanies* by A. C. Swinburne. (1886) pp. 231-232.

² In *The New Princeton Review* for May, 1888, there lies buried a fine paper on Pastoral Elegies by Charles G. D. Roberts—a paper that would bear re-printing even though it suggests the obvious aid of Mr. Stedman in his then but recently published *Victorian Poets*.

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This one we set above its grey-veiled peers,
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We crown it with the glory of the flowers,
We wind it with all magic that is ours
Of song and hope and jewel-coloured tears ;
We charm it with our love from taint of fears ;
We set it high against the sky that lowers,
To burn, a love-sign, from the topmost towers,
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DEATH, what hast thou to do with me? So saith
Love, with eyes set against the face of Death;
What have I done, O thou strong Death, to thee,
That mine own lips should wither from thy breath?

Though thou be blind as fire or as the sea,
Why should thy waves and storms make war on me?
Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,
Or for desire to kiss, if it might be,

My very mouth of song, and kill me there?
So with keen rains vexing his crownless hair,
With bright feet bruised from no delightful way,
Through darkness and the disenchanted air,

Lost Love went weeping half a winter's day.
And the armed wind that smote him seemed to say,
How shall the dew live when the dawn is fled,
Or wherefore should the Mayflower outlast May?

Then Death took Love by the right hand and said,
Smiling: Come now and look upon thy dead.
But Love cast down the glories of his eyes,
And bowed down like a flower his flowerless head.

And Death spake, saying: What ails thee in such wise,
Being god, to shut thy sight up from the skies?

If thou canst see not, hast thou ears to hear?
Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?

Even as he spake with fleshless lips of fear,
But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's ear,

Behold, the winter was not, and its might
Fell, and fruits broke forth of the barren year.

And upon earth was largess of great light,
And moving music winged for world-wide flight,
And shapes and sounds of gods beheld and heard
And day's foot set upon the neck of night.

And with such song the hollow ways were stirred
As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,

Or as the whole soul of the sun in spring
Should find full utterance in one flower-soft word,

And all the season should break forth and sing
From one flower's lips, in one rose triumphing;
Such breath and light of song as of a flame
Made ears and spirits of them that heard it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the same
The shape that led him, nor in face nor name,
For he was bright and great of thews and fair,
And in Love's eyes he was not Death, but Fame.

Not that grey ghost whose life is empty and bare
And his limbs moulded out of mortal air,

A cloud of change that shifts into a shower
And dies and leaves no light for time to wear:

But a god clothed with his own joy and power,
A god re-risen out of his mortal hour

Immortal, king and lord of time and space,
With eyes that look on them as from a tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral place
Bloomed, as new life might in a bloodless face,

And where men sorrowing came to seek a tomb
With funeral flowers and tears for grief and grace,

They saw with light as of a world in bloom
The portal of the House of Fame illume

The ways of life wherein we toiling tread,
And watched the darkness as a brand consume.

And through the gates where rule the deathless dead
The sound of a new singer's soul was shed

That sang among his kinsfolk, and a beam
Shot from the star on a new ruler's head.

A new star lighting the Lethean stream,
A new song mixed into the song supreme

Made of all souls of singers and their might,
That makes of life and time and death a dream.

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our sight
Wast as a sun that made for man's delight
Flowers and all fruits in season, being so near
The sun-god's face, our god that gives us light.

To him of all gods that we love or fear
Thou among all men by thy name wast dear,
Dear to the god that gives us spirit of song
To bind and burn all hearts of men that hear.

The god that makes men's words too sweet and strong
For life or time or death to do them wrong,
Who sealed with his thy spirit for a sign
And filled it with his breath thy whole life long.

Who made thy moist lips fiery with new wine
Pressed from the grapes of song the sovereign vine,
And with all love of all things loveliest
Gave thy soul power to make them more divine.

That thou might'st breathe upon the breathless rest
Of marble, till the brows and lips and breast
Felt fall from off them as a cancelled curse
That speechless sleep wherewith they lived opprest.

Who gave thee strength and heat of spirit to pierce
All clouds of form and colour that disperse,
And leave the spirit of beauty to remould
In types of clean chryselephantine verse.

Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold
To carve in shapes more glorious than of old,
And build thy songs up in the sight of time
As statues set in godhead manifold:

In sight and scorn of temporal change and clime
That meet the sun re-risen with refluent rhyme
—As god to god might answer face to face—
From lips whereon the morning strikes sublime.

Dear to the god, our god who gave thee place
Among the chosen of days, the royal race,
The lords of light, whose eyes of old and ears
Saw even on earth and heard him for a space.

There are the souls of those once mortal years
That wrought with fire of joy and light of tears
In words divine as deeds that grew thereof
Such music as he swoons with love who hears.

There are the lives that lighten from above
Our under lives, the spherul souls that move
Through the ancient heaven of song-illuminated air
Whence we that hear them singing die with love.

There all the crowned Hellenic heads, and there
The old gods who made men godlike as they were,
The lyric lips wherefrom all songs take fire,
Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.

There, round the sovereign passion of that lyre
Which the stars hear and tremble with desire,
The ninefold light Pierian is made one
That here we see divided, and aspire,

Seeing, after this or that crown to be won;
But where they hear the singing of the sun,
All form, all sound, all colour, and all thought
Are as one body and soul in unison.

There the song sung shines as a picture wrought,
The painted mouths sing that on earth say nought,
The carven limbs have sense of blood and growth
And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks not aught.

There all the music of thy living mouth
Lives, and all loves wrought of thine hand in youth
And bound about the breasts and brows with gold
And coloured pale or dusk from north or south.

Fair living things made to thy will of old,
Born of thy lips, no births of mortal mould,
That in the world of song about thee wait
Where thought and truth are one and manifold.

Within the graven lintels of the gate
That here divides our vision and our fate,
The dreams we walk in and the truths of sleep,
All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There what one thinks, is his to grasp and keep ;
There are no dreams, but very joys to reap,
 No foiled desires that die before delight,
No fears to see across our joys and weep.

There hast thou all thy will of thought and sight,
All hope for harvest, and all heaven for flight ;
 The sunrise of whose golden-mouthed glad head
To paler songless ghosts was heat and light.

Here where the sunset of our year is red
Men think of thee as of the summer dead,
 Gone forth before the snows, before thy day,
With unshod feet, with brows unchapleted.

Couldst thou not wait till age had wound, they say,
Round those wreathed brows his soft white blossoms? Nay
 Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with this harsh air,
Thy bright-winged soul, once free to take its way?

Nor for men's reverence hadst thou need to wear
The holy flower of grey time-hallowed hair ;
 Nor were it fit that aught of thee grew old,
Fair lover all thy days of all things fair.

And hear we not thy words of molten gold
Singing? or is their light and heat acold
 Whereat men warmed their spirits? Nay, for all
These yet are with us, ours to hear and hold.

The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the call
Of love to love on ways where shadows fall,
Through doors of dim division and disguise,
And music made of doubts unmusical ;

The love that caught strange light from death's own eyes,¹
And filled death's lips with fiery words and sighs,
And half asleep let feed from veins of his
Her close red warm snake's mouth, Egyptian-wise :

And that great night of love more strange than this,²
When she that made the whole world's bale and bliss
Made king of the whole world's desire a slave,
And killed him in mid kingdom with a kiss ;

Veiled loves that shifted shapes and shafts, and gave,³
Laughing, strange gifts to hands that durst not crave,
Flowers double-blossomed, fruits of scent and hue
Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger than the grave ;

All joys and wonders of old lives and new
That ever in love's shine or shadow grew,
And all the grief whereof he dreams and grieves,
And all sweet roots fed on his light and dew ;

All these through thee our spirit of sense perceives,
As threads in the unseen woof thy music weaves,
Birds caught and snared that fill our ears with thee,
Bay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-bound leaves.

¹ *La Morte Amoureuse.*

² *Une Nuit de Cléopâtre.*

³ *Mademoiselle de Maupin.*

Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy
Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we
 For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed,
And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blooms and white and rosy-red
We wind with poppies for thy silent head,
 And on this margin of the sundering sea
Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead.

SONNET.

(With a copy of MADEMOISELLE DE MAUPIN.)

THIS is the golden book of spirit and sense,
The holy writ of beauty; he that wrought
Made it with dreams and faultless words and thought
That seeks and finds and loses in the dense
Dim air of life that beauty's excellence
Wherewith love makes one hour of life distraught
And all hours after follow and find not aught.
Here is that height of all love's eminence
Where man may breathe but for a breathing-space
And feel his soul burn as an altar-fire
To the unknown God of unachieved desire,
And from the middle mystery of the place
Watch lights that break, hear sounds as of a quire,
But see not twice unveiled the veiled God's face.

AVE ATQUE VALE
In Memory of
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

1878.

"I do not mean . . . that the Fleurs du Mal should be bound up with the Christian Year. But I do say that no principle of art which does not exclude from its tolerance the masterpieces of Titian can logically or consistently reject the masterpieces of a poet who has paid to one of them the most costly tribute of carven verse, in lines of chiselled ivory with rhymes of ringing gold, that ever was laid by the high priest of one Muse on the high altar of another. And I must also maintain my opinion that the pervading note of spiritual tragedy in the brooding verse of Baudelaire dignifies and justifies at all points his treatment of his darkest and strangest subject."

A. C. SWINBURNE.
(*Miscellanies*, 1886.)

“THE full bloom of Swinburne's lyrical genius appears . . . in that large moulded ode, 'Ave atque Vale,' composed in memory of Charles Baudelaire. It is founded on the model of famous English prototypes, to wit, the 'Epitaph of Bion.' If unequal to 'Lycidas' in idyllic feeling, or to 'Adonais' in lofty scorn and sorrow, it is more imaginative than the former, and surpasses either in continuity of tone and the absolute melody of elaborate verse. Arnold's 'Thyrsis' is a wise and manly poem, closely adjusted to the classic phrase; but here is an ethereal strain of the highest elegiac order, fashioned in a severe yet flexible spirit of lyric art. In stanzaic beauty it ranks, with Keats's odes, among our rarest examples. . . . This threnody comes as directly from the heart as those of Shelley or Arnold lamenting Keats or Clough. . . . The 'Ave atque Vale' is a perfect example of the metrical affluence that renders his verse a marvel. . . .

“In one sense the motive thought is below the technical grandeur of the poem. Its ideals are Sappho, Proserpine, Apollo, and the Venus of Baudelaire, — not the Cytherean, but the Gothic Venus 'of the hollow hill.' The round of Baudelaire's conceptions is thus pursued, after the antique fashion, with exquisite and solemn power. The tone is not one of high laudation, but of a minstrel who recalls the dead as he was, — a chant of sorrow and appreciation, not of hope. What extravagance there may be is in the passion and poetry lavished upon the theme. It is an ode written for persons of delicate culture; no one else can grasp the allusions, though who so dull as not to be captivated by the sound!”

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

AVE ATQUE VALE.

•IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;
Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

Les Fleurs du Mal.

I.

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?
Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet ?

II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
 Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
 That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
 Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
 Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us:
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
 Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping,
 That were athirst for sleep and no more life
 And no more love, for peace and no more strife !
 Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
 Spirit and body and all the springs of song,
 Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
 Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
 Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
 Is it not well where soul from body slips
 And flesh from bone divides without a pang
 As dew from flower-bell drips ?

V.

It is enough ; the end and the beginning
 Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
 O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend,
 For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,
 No triumph and no labour and no lust,
 Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
 O quiet eyes wherein the light saith nought,
 Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
 With obscure finger silences your sight,
 Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
 Sleep, and have sleep for light.

VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
 Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,
 Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet
 Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
 Such as thy vision here solicited,
 Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
 The deep division of prodigious breasts,
 The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
 The weight of awful tresses that still keep
 The savour and shade of old-world pine-forests
 Where the wet hill-winds weep?

VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision?
 O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what bloom,
 Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the gloom?
 What of despair, of rapture, of derision,
 What of life is there, what of ill or good?
 Are the fruits grey like dust or bright like blood?
 Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,
 The faint fields quicken any terrene root,
 In low lands where the sun and moon are mute
 And all the stars keep silence? Are there flowers
 At all, or any fruit?

VIII.

Alas, but though my flying song flies after,
 O sweet strange elder singer, thy more fleet
 Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet,
 Some dim derision of mysterious laughter
 From the blind tongueless warders of the dead,
 Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's veiled head,
 Some little sound of unregarded tears
 Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
 And from pale mouths some cadence of dead sighs—
 These only, these the hearkening spirit hears,
 Sees only such things rise.

IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
 Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
 What ails us with thee, who art wind and air?
 What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
 Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
 Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
 Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
 Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
 The low light fails us in elusive skies,
 Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
 Are still the eluded eyes.

X.

Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes,
 Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,
 The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
 I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
 My spirit from communion of thy song—
 These memories and these melodies that throng
 Veiled porches of a Muse funereal—
 These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
 As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
 Or through mine ears a mourning musical
 Of many mourners rolled.

XI.

I among these, I also, in such station
 As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
 And offering to the dead made, and their gods,
 The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
 I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
 Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed
 Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
 And what of honey and spice my seedlands bear,
 And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
 And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
 A curl of severed hair.

XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
 Not like the low-lying head of Him, the King,
 The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
 Thou liest and on this dust no tears could quicken
 There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
 Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
 Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.
 Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns ;
 But bending us-ward with memorial urns
 The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
 Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
 Among us darkling here the lord of light
 Makes manifest his music and his might
 In hearts that open and in lips that soften
 With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.
 Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,
 And nourished them indeed with bitter bread ;
 Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,
 The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame
 Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
 Who feeds our hearts with fame.

XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunseting,
 God of all suns and songs, he too bends down
 To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
 And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.
 Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
 Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,
 Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
 And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
 Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,
 And over thine irrevocable head
 Sheds light from the under skies.

XV.

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,
 And stains with tears her changing bosom chill;
 That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,
 That thing transformed which was the Cytherean,
 With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
 Long since, and face no more called Erycine
 A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
 Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
 Did she, a sad and second prey, compel
 Into the footless places once more trod,
 And shadows hot from hell.

XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
 No choral salutation lure to light
 A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night
 And love's tired eyes and hands and barren bosom.
 There is no help for these things; none to mend,
 And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend,
 Will make death clear or make life durable.
 Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine
 And with wild notes about this dust of thine
 At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell
 And wreathe an unseen shrine.

XVII.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,
 If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
 And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.
 Out of the mystic and the mournful garden
 Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
 Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
 Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants grey,
 Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-hearted,
 Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that started,
 Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
 Among the days departed?

XVIII.

For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,
And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobeian womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done;
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.



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